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IS HOME RULE
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BY

JOSEPH HOCKING

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TO MY FRIENDS IN IRELAND.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,—

Will you, who shewed me so much kindness during my stay in the Emerald Isle, accept the dedication of this book? Before my visit I was a stranger to you all, yet in Ulster, in Leinster and Munster, you seemed to vie with each other as to who should give me the warmest welcome. Some of you are Unionists, and some are Home Rulers; most of you are Protestants, while others are not Protestants; but whatever your opinions on political or religious matters, each of you tried to give me the information I sought, and to let the light shine on dark places.

I cannot expect you to agree with all my conclusions; many of you will doubtless think I have wandered far away from the true path. But this I fain would believe: all of you will credit me with sincerity, and with trying, in however faulty a fashion, to express my honest convictions.

And you would not have me be unfaithful to the truth as I see it, even if by so doing I might advocate what you ardently believe, would you ?

With heartfelt thanks for your great generosity, and with many happy memories of the land of the shamrock.

Yours faithfully,

JOSEPH HOCKING.

Priors Corner,

Totteridge, Herts.

March, 1912.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

"If Home Rule did not mean Rome Rule, if by granting Ireland what the larger part of its population demands we were sure that we were not handing over the Protestants of the country to the mercy of Rome, I should not fear it. But there lies the difficulty. Would not Home Rule for Ireland mean the complete domination of the country by the priests, who receive their orders from Rome?"

These remarks were made to me by an intelligent man some time ago, when we were talking together about the measure which, according to all probability, is about to be brought before Parliament by the present Government. That they represent the feelings of a large body of people in the country I have every reason to believe, while from a great number of letters I have lately received from Ireland I am convinced that the Protestants of that country fear Home Rule as they might fear a pestilence.

Moreover, if Home Rule means Rome Rule, or even if it means anything like a permanent increase of Papal control over the destinies of Ireland, I am certain it would be the duty of England to oppose it by every lawful means. For Rome Rule means corrup-

tion, decadence, ruin. In saying this, I am moved by no unkind feelings towards Roman Catholics as individuals. I have no doubt that among them are to be found honest, loyal, noble people, as they are to be found among other religious communities. I believe also that no Roman Catholic should suffer any disability, of any kind whatever, because of his faith. Religious beliefs are sacred, and as long as the exercise of those religious beliefs does not interfere with loyal citizenship, no one should suffer in consequence. As a convinced Protestant, I must grant to others the liberties and privileges I claim for myself. To make any man suffer for his faith is a crime, and opposed to the very genius of the principles of Religious Liberty which have been such a factor in the making of our Empire.

Admiration for many Roman Catholics as individuals, however, must not close our eyes to the truth ; and the piety and loveableness of many Romanists do not nullify the truth that Rome Rule means corruption, decadence, and ruin. We must always distinguish between the individual and the system. Almost without exception, wherever Romanism has ruled, decay and ruin have followed. No one having the slightest knowledge of the life and history of the nations of the world can deny this. Rome Rule in Italy meant weakness and decay, and it was only when Italy threw off the shackles of Rome's dominion that Italy became

re-born and prosperous. Rome Rule in France has meant a nation of atheists, Rome Rule in Portugal has meant revolution, Rome Rule in Spain has made what was at one time the most powerful nation in Europe a byword and a reproach. Spain is a nation struggling to be free, struggling ineffectually, to rise out of the slough into which it has sunk because the Roman Church, with an iron hand, keeps it enslaved and submerged.

This, as far as I know, is not denied by any impartial historian, and thus if in Ireland Home Rule meant Rome Rule, it would be the duty of Englishmen to make any Home Rule measure impossible.

With Home Rule as a great political measure I have no concern in this inquiry. That is a matter for the politician pure and simple. Thus, in this little book I shall not pretend to discuss the difficulties of Irish finance, or of Irish representation in Parliament, or of Home Rule in relation to the Army, the Navy, or Commerce; my purpose is to try and arrive at an answer to a definite question—Does Home Rule mean Rome Rule?

As in this introductory chapter I am obliged to be somewhat personal and reminiscent, I may say that for many years I have been unable to make up my mind on the question. For many years I have in various ways expressed my convictions concerning the evils of Rome Rule, but I have never been completely convinced as to what would be the

result of Irish Home Rule. Academically, I was a Home Ruler ; that is, I believed in the justice of allowing a nation like Ireland to deal with purely Irish matters in their own way, subject to Imperial control. But when I considered the details of the case, when I reflected that three-fourths of the Irish people were under the control of the priests, and when I remembered the attitude of the Roman Church towards Protestantism, I was afraid ; neither could I see my way to hand over a quarter of the nation to the tender mercies of a hierarchy which is the sworn foe to Protestant liberties.

I am stating these things, not that I regard my own opinions and fears as of great importance, but because I have reason to believe that they express the feelings of millions in our land, and because they are not unimportant when considered in the light of what I shall have to say later in these pages.

The Home Rule question has now become more than a subject to be dealt with in debating societies. It is true that at the election which took place at the close of 1910, the Lords' Veto Bill loomed largely in the public press, and was discussed as the main issue on thousands of platforms ; but multitudes believed that behind this lay the Irish question. Indeed, Mr. Balfour declared that in voting for the present Government, people were voting for Home Rule, while Mr. Asquith admitted that the settlement of the Irish problem was an integral

part of his policy. Directly, therefore, the Lords' Veto Bill was passed, even though the National Insurance Bill became the chief subject of discussion in Parliament, Irish people prepared for battle. Home Rule and anti-Home Rule campaigns were arranged, and the nation as a whole knew that this thorny subject was again to be foremost. The Nationalists were repeating their time-worn faith that Ireland would never be happy, never at peace, never contented until Home Government was granted to them; while the Unionists of Ulster were vehement in their declaration that, come what would, they would never be subject to an Irish Parliament.

In the summer of 1911 I received a letter from one of the Ulster papers, asking me, in view of an important visit from Sir Edward Carson, to send a message from the English Nonconformist standpoint to help Ulster Unionists in their fight. To this I sent no answer. I was not convinced that Home Rule meant Rome Rule; moreover, I felt that my letter might be misunderstood. I could not subscribe to much of the Ulster policy, neither did I sympathise with some of the reasons urged for denouncing the present Government. A little later, however, I received a request from the editor of another Belfast paper, asking me to send through its pages, and the means it had at its disposal, a message to English Nonconformists, urging them to oppose any Home Rule measure.

In reply, I sent a letter, which was widely quoted in the Irish newspapers, and which lies before me as I write. As this letter brought me a vast amount of correspondence, and led indirectly, if not directly, to my writing this book, I will quote certain parts of it which bear on the question at issue.

“ Many Nonconformists in England are convinced Home Rulers. The idea appeals to their sense of justice : it also seems to them that the policy of the majority in Ireland managing Irish affairs is a sound one. Another section is entirely undecided what to do. They are constantly hearing reasons why Home Rule should be granted to Ireland, but they know little of the condition of Ireland, nor of the strong feeling in Ulster against it. They are eagerly awaiting light and leading on the matter. They are anxious that justice shall be done, but they fear Rome Rule, and yet they are not convinced that Home Rule means Rome Rule. Only a small section of English Nonconformists are entirely convinced that Home Rule would be unsafe as a principle and disastrous in its effects. What is needed is a complete knowledge of facts. . . . I am constantly receiving messages from Ulster to the effect that Home Rule would mean Rome Rule. *Convince the English Nonconformist of that, and the thing is as dead as Queen Anne.* But he must be convinced ; and here lies the gist of what I wish to say.

“ Belfast is a rich city. Ulster has many speakers

—eloquent, learned, and enthusiastic. Let Belfast send a large number of its best speakers and lecturers to England, and let them teach us concerning the inwardness of this question. Let them prove to the English Nonconformist, by reasoning, by facts from history, and from the very nature of Romanism, that Home Rule means Rome Rule, and no English Parliament will dare to pass it. Threats will not do this; wild talk about Ulster arming will not do it; but serious reasoning and statements of undeniable and convincing facts will do it.

“Another thing. It is no use to come to English Nonconformists and abuse the present Government, and advocate its downfall. They remember too vividly the injustice heaped upon them by the Tory party. They are yet smarting under the Sectarian Act of 1902, with all the suffering it meant. . . . If the people of Ulster fear the priests of Ireland, English Nonconformists have need to fear another kind of priest in England. That is why we would support you to a man if we believed that Home Rule would place you more under the Roman Church power. I urge you therefore to send over men to educate us. . . . We do not—cannot—know the facts of the case as you can; but the English Nonconformist has a great love for justice, and he has a strong hatred of priestcraft in every form.”

This letter, as I have said, was copied in the Irish newspapers, and, as I was informed, caused an

amount of controversy. Certain it is that my own correspondence greatly increased, and letters from every part of Ireland poured in upon me daily.

A little later I was led to write again to the same newspaper, from which I will take the following :—

“ I make bold to assert that Home Rule stands or falls as a great religious question. From the purely academic standpoint the policy that Irish people should manage Irish affairs seems just and reasonable, and as such it appeals to millions of people in this country. But at heart it cannot be looked at from the purely academic standpoint. Every student of history and every observer of the signs of the times know what the claims of Rome are, and what the influence of Rome really is. Thus the question arises—Can English Nonconformists vote for the handing over at least a fourth of the Irish people to the tender mercies of the three-fourths, which three-fourths are in the main dominated by the priests? If it can be proved that the Irish Protestants will have just treatment by the Roman section, then the objection to Home Rule, as far as the English Nonconformist is concerned, in the main breaks down. But will they? I have no word to say against Romanists as individuals, but I remember that the Romanists of Ireland, as elsewhere, are under a hierarchy that hates Protestantism and which, according to the very fundamentals of the Roman faith, must seek to stamp out heresy.

Moreover, as Protestantism is regarded as the worst form of heresy, the result seems clear.

“ But it is concerning this that we need light, and it was for that reason I urged that Ulster should send over its most learned, its most eloquent, and its most trusted advocates. . . .

“ That is why I desire to lift the question of Home Rule out of the realms of party politics. Make it a great religious question, and if you can prove that Home Rule means simply putting the priests in power, and make the English Nonconformists feel it, they will, in spite of John Redmond and his followers, force the Liberal Government to drop it from its programme.

“ I notice in the *Westminster Gazette* the following statement by Mr. John Redmond :—

‘ The allegation that in Ireland Protestants are boycotted because they are Protestants, and that this system of religious ostracism would be increased under an Irish Parliament, is not only cruel, but most offensive, because religious intolerance is repugnant to the feelings of Irish Catholics ; and, further, it is wicked, because neither now nor at any other period in their history, have Irish Catholics been guilty of persecution for conscience’ sake.’

“ Now, these words are true, or they are false. If they are true, then much of the Nonconformist fear is groundless ; but if they are false, they should be proved to be false. And this should be done, not by

men who desire to make party capital, but by those who have a passionate love for truth and for religious liberty and equality. Therefore, let those into whose souls the iron has entered, who have seen religious persecution with their own eyes, who can give details as to names of persons, and places, and dates, come and tell us what Rome does and is doing ; *and let them shew that these things are no accident, but the natural outcome of the system they fear*, and which dominates three-fourths of the people of Ireland."

I apologise for quoting at such length from these letters, but I do so for a purpose. They will shew at all events the attitude of mind with which I approached the question, and they will shew that I was deeply anxious to get at the truth.

Hosts of letters poured in, but in the main they did not answer the questions I asked. There was a multitude of words, but I got little light. My correspondence, moreover, was very confused, and often contradictory. One correspondent sent me two or three cases of persecution, but did not suggest that they represented the general feeling. One writer told me that he saw nothing for it but leaving the country if Home Rule passed, because he feared religious persecution ; while another, a Unionist, told me that he lived in the south-west of Ireland where very few Protestants lived, that he and his people were farmers, and had been for several generations, and he knew of no case of religious persecution. And so on.

Meanwhile, numbers of people wrote saying that if English people only knew the feelings of Irish Protestants, if they saw Ireland as it really was, they would be convinced that to break up the Union between England and Ireland, and to grant a Parliament in Dublin, would be little less than a crime. They also urged that the only way to understand the situation was to visit Ireland, talk with her people, and to learn the facts, not as they are represented by partisan newspapers, but by interviews with representative people.

Accordingly, I arranged to pay a visit to the Emerald Isle and study the question on the spot. I had for months been reading such literature as I was able to obtain, bearing on the various points at issue and I determined that, as far as possible, I would approach the subject with an absolutely open mind ; that I would study all sides of the matter ; that I would listen to the facts and arguments adduced by representative people of various parties, and draw my conclusions unfettered by fear or favour.

Perhaps it may be well to reiterate that with regard to Home Rule purely as a political question, I do not propose to deal. And certainly I did not have, neither have I now, any thought of party politics. I do not possess the qualifications to discuss the matter from the purely political aspect, even if I had the inclination. It is probable that I

shall have to touch upon various points which may seem to encroach upon the domain of the politician, but if I do, it will be only because those points have a very vital connection with the thought uppermost in my mind, " Is Home Rule Rome Rule ? "

In looking over my notes I find that I had lengthy interviews with at least fifty people. These people were not taken at haphazard, but in nearly every case they represented the best thought of the parties to which they belonged. I do not at the moment propose to give their names, although I took careful note of them. Suffice to say that one is a Lord Mayor of a great city, two are members of the Irish Privy Council, two are perhaps the largest employers of labour in the country, one is a Roman Catholic bishop, five are editors of the chief Irish newspapers, one is an ex-priest, several hold high and honoured places as ministers in the Protestant Churches of Ireland, four are highly-respected members of the Quaker community, three hold positions on the Irish Councils, several are magistrates, some are farmers who bought their farms under what is called the Wyndham Land Act, while others are men holding no office, but who represent the best thought of the respectable citizens of the country.

I am afraid that I saw more Unionists than Home Rulers, but that was because it was among the Unionists that I found the belief most strongly

entertained that Home Rule meant handing over the country to Rome, who would never rest until Protestantism was dead. Besides, scores of people had written me from Ulster telling me that English people did not understand their case, and I was determined to hear all they could tell me, and to try to understand the force of their arguments.

Of course, I did not confine my enquiries to the Protestant North, but went from Ulster to Munster; I also went to Dublin and its environs, and tried to understand the trend of thought there. During the whole of my stay I found the utmost courtesy and kindness; on all hands people were eager to give me information, so that if I do not understand the feeling of the country, it is not because I did not hear a free expression of opinion.

Naturally, I do not claim a real intimacy with Irish life; that can only be obtained by living in the country, breathing the atmosphere, and entering into the life of the people. But I do claim that I honestly tried to find out the truth concerning the question which has troubled me for a long time, and which gives the title to this little book. I also tried to differentiate between prejudice and principle, between hearsay and fact; and while I am by training and conviction a strong Protestant, I tried to take an impartial view of the situation, and to see facts from the standpoint of those between whose opinions and mine the poles lie.

CHAPTER II.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF ULSTER.

It may be well here if I devote a short chapter to my impressions of the Protestant North; for while it is largely visited by English people, doubtless many who read these lines have no intimate knowledge either of the great metropolis of Irish commerce, or of the prevailing characteristics of the people. To read much that is written in the public press one might be led to believe that Belfast is identical with a sour, morose, blood-thirsty Orangeism; that its people are an unlovely Puritanical set, who see no good in anything outside their own pet creeds, and who in thought and feeling are little removed from the time of the Battle of the Boyne, commemorated with so much enthusiasm even in the present day.

Nothing is further from the truth. Certainly, they are people of strong convictions, as I shall have to shew presently. But to call them canting, hypocritical, sour, morose, or unreasoning, is libellous in the highest degree. It is also cruel and wicked.

I write as I found, and I unhesitatingly assert that nothing can be further from the truth. Of course, there are extreme men and women among them, as there are everywhere, and it is undoubtedly true that the more pronounced Orange section still entertains the prejudices and bitter feelings that were born in the times of bloody strife and persecution. But these are only a comparatively small section of the community, and do not represent the larger life and thought of the great mass of the people.

Belfast is another Manchester, but cleaner and less smoky. It has fine public buildings, a splendid system of tramways, and gives evidence on every hand of a prosperous life. It has less poverty than any town of its size in the United Kingdom, and has less of the slum life than any great city with which I am acquainted. The Lord Mayor quoted to me with pride and satisfaction figures which shewed how small was the percentage of pauperism in their midst, and how well behaved was the whole community. He also enlarged upon the general well-being, especially of the Protestant parts of the city and of the province, of the smallness of the number of police in comparison with its population, and of the general contentment which prevailed. There is no doubt whatever that his pride was justified.

It is impossible not to be impressed with the

vigorous, keen-sighted life of this metropolis of Northern Ireland. I had the privilege of being present at the meeting of the City Council when the Lord Mayor was elected for the third time to his position of influence and honour, and at the luncheon which followed, and as I studied the faces of the members of the City Council I could not help being impressed. They are strong, capable, virile, thinking men, these citizens of the North of Ireland. Men with conviction, and perseverance, and courage, and grit. They would succeed anywhere, and almost under any circumstances. As I talked with them I was reminded of the story told about Mr. Gladstone. It is said that on one occasion Huxley was staying at the house of Darwin when Gladstone paid them a flying visit. When the great statesman had gone, Huxley asked Darwin what he thought of him. "Think of him!" cried Darwin. "That is a man who if, unknown and friendless, were turned out on Salisbury Plain with only one garment to his back, would rise to the foremost position of the country."

I know this has no direct connection with the subject I have set out to discuss; nevertheless, it is well for us to understand the kind of men with whom we have to deal. They are not tossed about by every strange wind of doctrine. They are men with strong convictions, who march steadily forward towards the thing upon which they have set their minds.

Possibly this is largely owing to their religious training. I should judge, although I did not attend any of their churches, that they are strongly imbued with the Calvinistic theology of their forefathers. In the main, they are Presbyterians, for Presbyterianism looms much larger than any other religious community in the life of the city. And whatever the Calvinistic theology has done for the world, it has produced strong, virile men. All that grim determination which characterises the Scotch also characterises their theological descendants in the great manufacturing and trading city of Belfast.

But a more kind-hearted and hospitable people it would be difficult to find. I went there a perfect stranger, and yet each seemed to vie with the other in shewing me kindness. Although I did not know a single soul in the city before I went there, numbers of people offered me hospitality. At least a dozen homes were offered me, and although I chose to stay at an hotel, it was in opposition to the wish of those for whom I shall never have anything but the kindest feelings. People further removed from the traditional bigots of whom many newspapers have spoken so much, I never met. Whether Belfast is right or wrong in the attitude it has taken, that attitude cannot, as far as a stranger may judge, be set down to the narrow bigotry or hatred to their "fellow Christians," which seems to be the opinion of many.

Indeed, I am inclined to think there are some who possess a spirit of toleration and broad-minded charity which would be very difficult to find in England. Moreover, as it is often said that the Protestants of Belfast have no breadth of view, and that the Roman Catholics are far more tolerant and generous, I will give one striking instance which illustrates another aspect of the question.

The largest linen manufactory in Ulster, perhaps in the world, is known in Belfast as the York Street Spinning Co. This company, at whose head is Sir William Crawford, employs between 5,000 and 6,000 hands, many of whom are boys and girls, and who are what is commonly known as "half-timers," as far as their school life is concerned. Among these boys and girls are a large number of Roman Catholics. The company, on their own initiative, provided and fitted out a day school for these half-timers, and paid for their education. For some time all went well. The Protestant boys and girls were educated side by side with the Roman Catholics, and no religious bias was given in their education. The Roman Catholic parents were to all appearances perfectly happy and contented with the arrangement, as indeed it was natural they should be. The school was good, and the circumstances under which they were educated were favourable to the well-being of the young people.

Then the priest appeared. He visited the mills,

and told Sir William Crawford that he could not allow Roman Catholic children to be educated side by side with Protestants. Sir William urged in reply that the children were perfectly happy, and that the results were good. The priest replied that he wished the children to have a Roman Catholic education. The employer then told the priest that as it seemed a pity to withdraw the children, he would be pleased to offer facilities for the clergyman of the Roman Catholic Church to come to the schools and give the children instruction in their own faith. The priest would not accept this. He said he wanted a Roman Catholic atmosphere for children of that faith, and nothing else would satisfy him. He therefore withdrew all the Roman Catholic children from the school (note the power the priest must have to be able to do this), and placed them in a Romanist school. In spite of this, however, this "bigoted Protestant" continued to pay for their education, not diminishing by one jot or tittle the amount he had previously contributed for this purpose.

And yet Sir William Crawford is a Presbyterian, and a Protestant of Protestants. He is, if I remember aright, the son of a Presbyterian clergyman, and has a son who is in the Presbyterian ministry and labouring as a foreign missionary. I wonder whether a similar instance of broad charity can be found among those who condemn "Ulster bigotry." I

wonder, too, whether in the whole annals of the Church of Rome an action even remotely corresponding to this can be found among its convinced believers.

Another thing should be borne in mind. In this city of Belfast, and indeed this is in the main true of Ireland generally—at least, so I was informed in many quarters—scarcely any of the drink shops are kept or owned by Protestants; and that but for the numbers of people who pour in from the south and west of Ireland, not only the pauper rate but cases of drunkenness would be considerably reduced.

On the whole, Belfast is a sober, God-fearing city, and the Protestants of Ulster a well-conducted, thrifty people. The people retain many of the traits of their Puritan ancestors. The Sabbath is far more observed than in England, and its people respond to the call of the church bells as in the days of their forefathers. I am afraid that the vices common to all great cities sadden the hearts of its best people; nevertheless, from all I could gather, it compares favourably with any city of its size throughout the United Kingdom.

Two other things strike one very forcibly in visiting Ulster. There are two races there—the Irish and the English—for that matter, the latter are an amalgam of Scotch and English. And, as was the case in Palestine two thousand years ago, for all social purposes the Jews have no dealings

with the Samaritans. The Irish and the English may meet in business ; they may meet sometimes in relation to political matters, but there is practically no social intercourse between them. The fact that they have lived together on the same soil for three hundred years does not seem to affect them ; and nothing has eradicated the deep and vital distinctions between the two people. No doubt their religion has had a great deal to do with it. A thick and high wall of partition has ever existed between Protestant and Romanist ; and the English and Scotch portion of the population is essentially Protestant, while the Irish is essentially Catholic.

As far as I know, there have been during the centuries scarcely any cases of conversion from one faith to the other. Those who were sent to Ireland as settlers by the British Government have retained all the characteristics of the land from which they came—and there seems no possibility of a change. Indeed, the Protestant portion of the population does not call itself Irish, although it has been in Ireland for hundreds of years.

A capital story is told of an Irish doctor in a London hospital expressing sympathy with a patient whose rich brogue at once proclaimed his place of origin.

“ You are an Irishman,” said the doctor.

“ Irishman,” replied the other ; “ I am not an Irishman.”

“ But you have the brogue.”

“ Brogue ? That goes for nothing,” was the reply.

“ But you live in Ireland ? ”

“ Sure, and Ireland is the place where I was born and reared.”

“ How long have you lived there ? ”

“ All my life.”

“ And your people ? ”

“ Sure, and my people have lived in Skibbereen over two hundred years. They were planted there in the time of Cromwell.”

“ But in that case,” said the doctor, “ you must be Irish.”

“ Never a bit am I Irish ; I am English to the backbone.”

“ How can you and your people live in a country for over two hundred years and still not belong to that country ? ”

“ Can’t you see,” said the man ; “ didn’t the children of Israel live in Egypt for four hundred years, but were they ever Egyptians ? And do you mean to tell me that my family, because they have lived in Ireland for two hundred years, are Irish ? No ; we were English when we went there, and we are English now.”

That story gives a true idea of the Ulster Irishman in this respect. Nothing has ever broken down their racial distinctions. Nothing has ever destroyed the fact that they are of English origin, and they mean

to remain English. Perhaps that is one reason why the English portion of the population so strongly opposes Home Rule. They fear that they would be in a minority ; that they would be governed by Irishmen with Irish ideas, and therefore they oppose it. This fact, also, must be borne in mind. Because the English and Scotch are intelligent, thrifty, vigorous, strong, and therefore have become prosperous, they look with a degree of scorn upon the poverty-stricken and priest-ridden Irishman ; and they have a feeling of indignation at the thought that they, who have ever been the predominant race, should have their laws made for them by the people whom they so much despise.

The other fact is this. Protestantism in Ireland *means* Protestantism. It is not a hybrid thing. In this respect there is at present practically no difference between the Episcopalian, the Presbyterian, the Methodist and other Churches. For that matter, all the Protestant Churches hold strongly together. Episcopalians go to Wesleyan schools, and *vice versa*, without thinking that they are sacrificing any principle by so doing.

Moreover, any approach to what they call popery is repugnant to them. There are practically no " high " churches in the Episcopal Church of Ireland. In the Protestant cathedrals, even, the services are of a most simple nature, and as a rule there are no attempts at decorations, or what is called " ornate "

services. Consequently, the line of distinction between Protestant and Catholic is very marked indeed. They say, and perhaps they say truly, that living in such close relationship with the Roman Catholic and seeing what it has meant in the life of the Irish people, has given them a strong repugnance to anything that savours of popery. If you wish to hear the High Church party in England denounced, and ritualism laughed at as a mere apeing of popery—talk to the Irish Episcopalian. He scorns the very thought of it, and proclaims his Protestantism in no uncertain ways. Not even the Presbyterians, with all their strong hatred of the papacy and with all their freedom from anything like ritualistic pretensions, are more anti-papal than the Irish Episcopalian ; while, as for the Methodist and the smaller communions, they are at one with the great Presbyterian body in holding fast those principles which they regard as the glory of the nation.

These two facts help to explain the antagonism of the Protestants of Ireland—especially those of Ulster—to the thought of Home Rule. Nevertheless, as I have before stated, nothing is further from the truth than to think of them as sour and bigoted. They are, in most respects, a broad-minded, charitable people. But in this one respect of hatred of popery, there can be no doubt to them it means slavery—something to be opposed as long as they have breath.

CHAPTER III.

THE VOICE OF ULSTER.

THERE was but one topic in Ulster during the month of January in the present year when I visited it. All other subjects were swallowed up in it, or sunk into insignificance compared with the one prevailing question as to whether a law placing Ireland under a Dublin Parliament was to be passed. But Home Rule as such is not a matter for discussion; the day for that is passed. The people have made up their minds; they are convinced as to the evil of Home Rule. The rights and wrongs of the matter are not matters of debate; the real thing at issue is how they are to make their convictions felt. Everywhere it is the same. In the streets, shops, hotels, offices, clubs, homes, the one topic among Nationalists is "Will Home Rule be granted?" and "How can we overcome the opposition of the Unionists?" while among the Unionists there is everywhere expressed the determination to fight the thing to the death.

The Nationalists, as far as I can gather, sum up

their demand for Home Rule in very few words. "Why do you want Home Rule?" I asked again and again of the Nationalists, both in Ulster in the north and Munster in the south, and their replies were almost identical—"We want Home Rule because we are Irishmen, and we want to govern our country according to Irish ideas. At present we are under an alien people. We are Irish, not English. We are Catholics, while England is Protestant."

They do not seem to think they will be better off under a Dublin Parliament. They realise that during the last quarter of a century much has been done for them. They admit that England has poured much wealth into the nation, and that they are indebted to the British Government for their district councils, their means for purchasing their own farms, and for old age pensions. For the latter boon they seem to be especially grateful, and tell of the contrast between the present comfort of the old people and their one-time sordid, cankering poverty. They own, too, that Ireland is on the way to being prosperous.

"Wyndham's Land Act," said one farmer to me, "has changed the face of the country. Instead of farmers being crushed and starved, they can now hold up their heads with pride because they feel they have a stake in the country they love, and because they can make a decent living."

But this does not satisfy them.

“ We want to govern our own country,” they said again and again, in answer to my questions.

“ Even if you are worse off ? ” I urged.

“ Sor,” said one man to me, “ sure and I don’t believe we shall be worse off. But even if we are not so well off, we still want to govern our own land in our own way.”

Against this the Protestants of Ulster are in the main deadly opposed ; they dread the thought of Home Rule ; they hate it, and they vow that they will fight it to the death.

Their objections are in the main three. There is first the financial objection. They are profoundly convinced that to place Ireland under a Dublin Parliament would ruin them financially, and destroy the prosperity which through the centuries has been built up. The second objection is that of race. They say they are Englishmen and Scotchmen, the sons of the men who were sent to Ireland centuries ago for a specific purpose. They have fulfilled the purpose for which they were sent ; they are children of the mother country ; and they refuse to be governed by the Irish people. But their main objection is something deeper, something more vital ; they are Protestants, and Home Rule means Rome Rule, and they set their teeth together and vow that never will they be governed by Rome.

“ Now tell me,” I asked, “ what are your reasons

for believing that if Home Rule is granted you will be governed from Rome ? ” This question was asked of the editor of an important newspaper.

“ Well, to begin with,” was the reply, “ I need not tell you about the aims and purposes of Rome. Never was the Church of Rome more aggressive, never was its attitude so ultramontane as to-day, and Rome hates Protestantism with a deadly hatred. Romanists are jealous of our prosperity, jealous of whatever power we may possess. They regard us as trespassers in their land, they feel towards us exactly as the Romanists of Ireland felt towards our forefathers in the time of James II. You accuse the Orangemen of gloating over the Protestant victories at the time of the battle of the Boyne, but the Roman Church remembers those days too, and it vows that it will be revenged. To the ecclesiastical mind Protestantism was born in hell, and it will never rest until all Protestants are driven from the land.”

“ What proof have you of this ? ” I asked.

“ Proof ! ” was the reply. “ I have made it my business to read the newspapers of Ireland for fifteen years, and I have made myself acquainted with the opinions expressed not only in the secular press, but in the Catholic journals. In those Catholic journals, the mind of the Church is writ large. I tell you, you have no idea in England of the purposes and power of the Roman Church. I have

lived in England for years, and I know. There the Church is polite and comparatively apologetic, but here it is dictatorial, aggressive, blatant. It rules with an iron hand. Besides, as you very well know, the motto of Roman Catholicism is *Semper Eadem*. It never alters."

"But give a concrete example."

"Well, here is one. The Jesuits, as you know, are a tremendous power in the Church generally, while in Ireland they are everywhere. Here is an extract from *Catholic Progress*, a paper edited by a Jesuit: 'The woes of Ireland are due to one cause—the existence of Protestantism. The ancient Catholic churches are still in Protestant hands. Would that every Protestant meeting-house were swept from the land. Then would Ireland recover herself.'"

"But a stray paragraph from a newspaper proves nothing?"

"That may be, but such paragraphs may be multiplied by the score. Besides, you cannot live in the country without realising that this is the general feeling of the hierarchy. You see Ireland is the most Roman Catholic country in the world. Nowhere have its priests such power, nowhere, unless you go to some of the South American republics, are the people so obedient to the will of the Church. As a matter of fact, Ireland is dominated by the Vatican now."

This is a sample of many conversations I had with leading people in Ulster, and it was on these lines that I made my enquiries. I found everywhere, that, according to the convictions of Ulster, the Church was dominating all life, civil and religious; that its power was felt everywhere, and that no legislation could take place without the Church's sanction.

"Talk about a Dublin Parliament ruling!" cried one prominent citizen to me, "it would not rule. A Dublin Parliament would be the instrument of the Church. Just think of it! Protestants would only be able to send representatives from Ulster, for although there are a good number of Protestants in the south and west of Ireland, they would nowhere be numerous enough to return a member. Thus, supposing there were, say, sixty members in the Irish Parliament, we should have only a handful. But that would not be the worst of it. All the Roman Catholics would be the nominees of the Church, and the creatures of the Church. If any of them dared to take an independent stand they would be crushed."

"How crushed?"

"Just as Parnell was crushed. Just as any man who dares to assert his own opinions to-day is crushed. Don't you realise the power of the Church? Even now Rome rules and controls. You may pass laws, but the Church rides through your Acts of Parliament with a coach and four."

As this question seemed important, I laid special emphasis upon it, and the following is what I heard on every hand. And will the reader please remember that I am not for the moment expressing any opinion of my own, but the prevailing convictions of the vast majority of Protestants of Ireland? What conclusions I was led to will be given later, after I had heard and sifted the evidence on all sides.

“How does the Church of Rome rule to-day?” I asked.

“In this way,” was the reply (and here I will summarise what was said to me especially in Ulster and Dublin). “First, take your Lord Lieutenant and Chief Secretaries for Ireland. You boast that they are Protestants, but they take their orders from Rome. What happens when a new Lord Lieutenant or Chief Secretary is appointed? They want to get along with as little friction as possible, so that their reign may be spoken of as peaceful and prosperous. To do this they must make terms with Rome, for if they offend the Roman prelates, their days are numbered. Accordingly they make friends with the Mammon of Unrighteousness. They go to Archbishop Walsh and Cardinal Logue, and say, ‘What do you want?’ They place themselves under the dictation of the Roman hierarchy.”

“But what proof have you of this?”

“Proof! You can’t live in Ireland and have your eyes open without seeing it. Of course there

have been one or two Irish Secretaries who have been strong enough to take their own line, but they are very rare. John Morley, for example, was a strong man, and meted out even-handed justice, as a consequence no man is more respected among the Irish loyalists than he ; but the rest of them, especially the present Irish Secretary, have been in the main at the beck and call of the papal representatives. Talk about your present Government being Liberal and Nonconformist ! It is the tool of the papacy."

" Still you have not given proof, only opinions."

" They are more than opinions, they are convictions after years of experience of Romish rule. Take, for example, the Irish Councils Bill of 1906. You will remember that the present Irish Secretary brought it before Parliament. This Irish Councils Bill had one supreme merit : it meant the beginning of something like a popular government for the schools. Well, naturally the Minister in charge would not bring in such a Bill without first consulting Redmond and the other Irish members, and they gave it their blessing. What happened ? After the Bill was brought before Parliament, Redmond and others came back and laid it before the Convention, which is a body ruled by the ecclesiastics. The result was inevitable : the Church killed it, and the Bill was buried. I don't say it was perfect, but that is not the point. The Church did not want it, and the Church killed it.

“ Then take the question of Education. Possibly you do not understand our system. Broadly speaking, it is this. The schools of Ireland are what is called National. There are five classes of schools, the Roman Catholic, the Episcopalian, the Presbyterian, the Methodist, and the Model schools; and the priest or clergyman is the manager of the schools. The Church has to support the fabric of the schools and the State pays for all the teachers. The Presbyterian and the Methodist have a committee who work with the clergyman in the management of the schools, but in the eyes of the law the clergyman is responsible for the employment and dismissal of teachers as well as for the general management. In the Roman Church the priest is the sole authority. Thus we have in Ireland no less than 6,000 priests appointed managers of 6,000 National schools, with from 7,000 to 8,000 teachers absolutely under their control. They receive the State grants and they pay the teachers. In those National schools it was passed by Act of Parliament that no religious emblems, such as Roman Catholic pictures or crosses, should be seen. You see in certain districts, where Roman Catholics are in such a tremendous majority, it is almost impossible for Protestant schools to exist, and therefore Protestant children have to attend Romanist schools. As a consequence it was thought right that no attempt at proselytising in any form should take place. In

John Morley's days this was strictly adhered to, and no emblem of any sort appeared ; but in later years we are constantly hearing reports that religious emblems appear in the Roman schools in spite of the law, and that their children are taught to pay homage to them.

“ Then there are many schools in which nuns are the teachers. These nuns, of course, receive no salaries, yet the priests receive the State subsidies as though they were paid teachers. Where does this money go ? ”

“ But,” I urged, “ assuming that all this is a correct description, it happens under the Union. How would you be worse under Home Rule ? ”

“ If these things are done in the green what will happen in the dry ? ” was the reply. “ At present the English Government does give some semblance of safety, but what will it be when the Government is immediately under the control of the Church ? But go a little further, and it will shew you how we are governed by Rome. The National Board of Education established a training college for the training of teachers, Protestant and Catholic alike. The training was good, it was healthy, and there was no suggestion of religious bias. Well, what happened ? The Church refused to appoint teachers who had been trained at this college, and she obtained Government grants to establish no less

than five training colleges of her own, under the management of the priests. You talk about the days of endowment of churches being over ! What is that but endowing the Roman Church ? You are paying for the advancement of the Roman Church.

“ Then look for a moment at the Model Schools. They were established with the consent of the priests. Their chief characteristic was that Protestant and Romanist could be trained side by side. Presently, however, the Church declared that the Model Schools did not ‘ make good Catholics,’ and so the Church killed them. Model Schools, except in very rare cases, have ceased to exist.

“ Go a little further, and you will see the power of the Roman Church in Ireland. As you know, what were called the Queen’s Colleges were established amongst us. They were noble institutions, and did their work on unsectarian and liberal lines. But they were not under priestly management, and so the Church disapproved of them. What followed ? They were killed.

“ Take another instance, Years ago the Maynooth College received £8,000 a year from the Government. Well, that sum was increased to £26,360 a year on the pretext that there was no provision for the higher education of the Roman Catholic laity. What followed ? Immediately afterwards Maynooth College *closed her doors to all*

but candidates for the priesthood. But the grant goes on. Think of it ! A Protestant country is giving this huge sum of money yearly to Maynooth College, which exists only to train priests. Moreover, the education given is of the most obscurantist and ultramontane nature, while you quietly fold your hands, allow these things to continue, and then promise Home Rule, which will more than ever place the country under the control of Rome !

“ A year or two ago you passed the Irish University Act. Your Parliament put in all sorts of clauses safeguarding the Protestants, and making sectarianism impossible. But the British Government did not realise the power of the Church of Rome. Cardinal Logue, who is one of the, if not the, leading Catholic dignitary in Ireland, and speaks for the papal hierarchy more truly than any other man, when speaking at St. Mary's College, June 6, 1911, told the world what the Romish Church means to do and how she regards the Act. He says : ‘ Now there is an opportunity for the Catholic laymen of Ireland. They have now an opportunity of receiving a good university education, *in which at least they will be exposed to no danger.* There is no doubt whatever, England never gave us a boon that they did not put a crook in. They always tried to do something to introduce the drop of bitterness into the sweetest cup that ever was. That is precisely what they did in giving us this new university.

They gave what they hoped to be a pagan university; but, please God, we will turn it into a Catholic university. They have brought a Mohammedan institution into the country, but turn loose upon it a lot of fine young Irish Catholics, and they will make it a Christian institution. That is what we will do with this new university. No matter what obstacles the Nonconformists of England may have inserted in the constitution of the university to keep it from being made Catholic—*we will make it Catholic in spite of them.*”

“That is undoubtedly strong language,” I replied, “but is not Cardinal Logue somewhat of an orator, and does he represent the mind of the Church? Has anything been done on the lines he has suggested?”

“Done! Think of the present state of things. You will of course remember the safeguards. For instance, when the Bill was in Committee, and during the discussion of its financial clauses, this amendment was moved:

“‘Provided that no part of the moneys authorised by the resolution shall be used or applied for the purpose of denominational education.’

“In the discussion of this amendment the then Attorney-General, Mr. (now Lord Justice) Cherry, who was in charge of the Bill on behalf of the Government, said—

“‘The honourable member has declared there was

nothing in the amendment which was contradictory to the declaration of the Chief Secretary when he said that no portion of this money would be applied to denominational purposes in Ireland. *That declaration was binding upon the Chief Secretary and the Government.* The pledge which his right honourable friend the Chief Secretary gave on a previous occasion, applied both to the Charter and to the Bill, and both to the college and the university itself. There was no intention in the remotest degree on the part of the Government to violate that pledge.'

" Now, that safeguard is duly recorded in Hansard. Can anything be plainer or more binding ? That is, moreover, one of the safeguards which Cardinal Logue sneered at and defied. Well, what has been done in this university which was to be undenominational ? First, Archbishop Walsh, one of the leading Roman Catholic prelates in Ireland, was made Chancellor.

" Second, this same Archbishop has demanded that a chapel for Roman Catholics attending its Dublin College shall be built out of the university funds.

" Third, the philosophy taught in its Dublin College is exclusively the philosophy (that is, ecclesiastic and mediæval) of the Roman Catholic Church.

" And fourth, Maynooth, which I have just said is a college exclusively for the training of priests, is affiliated with the university.

“ Now, then, think of what those four points mean, and then ask whether Cardinal Logue was not right when he made his boast. Why, the University Act was only passed about two years ago, and yet see what they have done. As I remarked before, the Roman Church can, and will, drive a coach and four through any Act of Parliament you may pass, and laugh at you for being simpletons.”

“ Certainly you present a strong case,” I could not help saying.

“ Strong case ! I could go on for hours. You see, the basic ground for our opposition is religion. We Protestants are your brothers in faith, and in our love for religious freedom. And Rome is the enemy to that freedom. We may be called intolerant because we are so determined in our opposition, but it is because we know what Rome is. If Ireland were all Protestant, or all Roman Catholic, the question would assume an entirely different aspect, but it is not. We form a fourth of the population, and I do not say it boastfully, but we form the prosperous, the intelligent, the educated, the virile portion of the population. That is why we absolutely refuse to be placed under a government which from the very nature of the case *must* be dominated by the Roman hierarchy. For you must understand that while the Roman Catholic people of Ireland are poor, the Roman Church in Ireland is one of the wealthiest corporations in the

world. It is a matter of common knowledge that the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin commands more wealth than any man in Ireland, and it is freely said that he could break two of the largest banks in Ireland by a stroke of his pen."

"And does the power of the Roman Church press hardly on the Protestants—that is, in a direct way?"

I asked this question of one of the leading men in the Presbyterian Ministry, a man who had occupied the highest position in that Church.

"Press hardly!" was his reply. "Here is an experience of my own. I had need to enlarge the school of which I am manager. This enlargement would, we estimated, cost about £500. I therefore made my appeal to the proper quarter, and submitted the necessary plans. The Government official went into the case and reported that he was perfectly satisfied as to our needs. He brought the necessary documents for me to sign, and told me that the matter would go through without delay. I told him that we would not tax the generosity of the Government too far, and that we would try and raise £200 out of the £500 ourselves, thus leaving only £300 for him to obtain. As I said, I signed all the papers, and I thought I should soon receive the money. That was years ago, but I have never received the money to this day. Now, then, for the other side of my story. A long time after I had made my application, a Roman Catholic priest in

this same city made an appeal to the Government for a very large sum. His case, in my judgment, was not nearly so urgent as ours ; but his money came soon, and his buildings, costing several thousand pounds, are erected. That is how the power of the Roman Church is felt."

I give this story for what it is worth. Certainly I had it at first hand from a minister holding a high place in the Presbyterian Church, and the gentleman who was with me when he told the incident spoke of him as a man of stainless honour. Moreover, this narrative was given to me as indicating a trend of things.

" And do you mean to say that the priest has as much power over the peasants as has been indicated by certain sections of the press ? "

I asked this question of the editor of one of the principal daily papers in Dublin.

" Let me give you an idea," was the reply. " I remember being at an election in a town in the south-west of Ireland. I saw the priests bring in the peasants from the country places to vote as though they were a flock of pigs. Some of these poor people did not behave in a way that pleased their spiritual fathers, and I saw the priests kick and cuff them as though they were snarling dogs. Then afterwards I saw these same people kiss the hand that had cuffed them. That is no fairy story. I saw it with my own eyes, and these are the people,

priests and people alike, who will be our rulers under a Home Rule Parliament."

The following incidents were also told me by a member of the Irish Bar as indicating a state of things that must make any man pause. Many of the details were witnessed by my informant who was professionally interested in the case. In Westport, county Mayo, a colporteur, a graduate of a Scotch university, went to a shop and sold one of his magazines. Shortly after a priest entered and saw the magazine. He asked the shopkeeper where it came from. On being told, he rushed out of the shop, found the colporteur, and kicked and maltreated him. The colporteur at length escaped under police protection. The priest went off proudly. After some delay there was a prosecution. The priest went into the court, which was presided over by a paid magistrate and a local publican, attended by bands of music, and people who came from the whole countryside. It was a sort of triumphal procession. When the case was tried, the facts were not controverted, but the defence, which was entrusted to the present Lord Chancellor of Ireland, pleaded provocation through an article in the magazine that criticised the claims of the Virgin Mary to be worshipped. The result of the trial was that the paid magistrate wished to convict the priest, and the local magistrate (the publican) wished to acquit, and in the end the priest went off in a renewed

triumphal procession, while the colporteur was smuggled out of the town by the police."

This same story, I may say, was afterwards related to me by a minister who lived in the district, and attested to its truth.

"But," I asked, "was there no public protest? Surely the public spirit of the place would drive the priest out of the parish?"

"Public spirit!" was the reply. "There is no public spirit in the rural districts of Ireland. The priest rules, and no one dares to touch him. Why, in relation to this case I spoke privately to several Roman Catholics, and they told me they were tempted to rush on the priest, and pull him away from the colporteur. But they dared not. They feared his power, and the power of the Church."

But to return to my barrister friend, who first told me the story.

"I have seen on a week-end visit to County Galway," he said, "a man attending the Presbyterian Church service accompanied by two police constables with loaded rifles to protect him, and my information is that he is still so protected. But there is a more insidious way in which the priests' power is felt. In the same church the Presbyterian minister has a very clever family: one is a doctor who took up work in his native town (Athenry). He was a favourite and got a fine practice. Then came a warning from the Church altar, and his practice vanished as if by magic."

“ And what do you deduce from this ? ” I asked.

“ I am simply illustrating the power of the Church,” was the reply. “ The priest holds the people body and soul, and they dare not disobey his dictums.”

For the present I will offer no opinion on these incidents, as I wish to refer to the whole subject again later on, but this must be admitted. The power of the priest is simply enormous. As one writer, an Irishman who knows his country thoroughly, says :—

“ The power of that [the Roman] Church to enforce her will, depends almost entirely on whether there is a Catholic lay opinion independent enough to resist her claims, and a Government sufficiently strong to keep her aspirations within bounds. With regard to the Roman Catholic lay opinion, there is none. And there never has been any—the Church is in supreme command, and the priests have absolute control over their people’s affairs temporal and spiritual. They issue commands from the altar, they dictate from the platform, and they give orders from the cabin. Ireland to-day is the most priest-ridden country in the world, and if evidence on this point were necessary it is sufficient to state that the Headmasters’ Association is entirely composed of priests, and that the parish priest is practically *ex-officio* chairman of every political meeting held within his parish. It will be seen therefore that

there is no lay representative in education or politics, and consequently there can be no lay opinion on these two great subjects of human interest and human thought. Could such a state of affairs hold for a moment, or could their parallel be found anywhere else ? ”

I am giving full prominence to this phase of Ulster's objection to Home Rule. They say that the facts I have stated are unknown in England, and I am anxious to do justice to their case. Whether they are right or wrong, we can only arrive at just conclusions by considering carefully all their evidence and placing it in its true perspective. Of course, there is another side. There always is; but I am convinced that no one can understand the facts I have set down, without agreeing that the Protestants of Ireland have reason for opposing Home Rule. As I said, the whole question is, with them, fundamentally religious. If the people were not dominated by the priests, they would not be afraid; if the tentacles of the Church were not spread everywhere, fastening themselves upon every phase of the life of three-fourths of the people, the Protestants could trust in the righteousness of their cause; but knowing as they do that the Church and her minions would meet and obstruct them in every road that would lead to justice and to liberty, they offer an unflinching opposition.

CHAPTER IV.

THE NE TEMERE DECREE, AND MY VISIT TO MRS. MCCANN.

ONE of the things often urged, while I was in the North of Ireland, in opposition to Home Rule, and as an evidence of the arrogant power of the Church of Rome, was the now notorious Ne Temere decree. There is little need for me to discuss it here at any length, as its meaning and significance must be well known to my readers. Suffice to say that this decree, which was not enforced in the British Isles, was declared at Easter, 1908, to be operative in our midst. It has for many years been regarded as the law of the Church in many other countries, but we like Germany, Austria, and other lands, did not come under its sway. Suddenly it came in our midst like a bolt from the blue. It declared that no marriage was valid in the eyes of Rome, unless sacramentally performed. In other words, it declared that many people who regarded themselves as man and wife, and were man and wife in the eyes of the English law, were living in sin.

It declared that if a Protestant married a Roman Catholic, and the marriage ceremony was not performed by a priest of the Church of Rome, their marriage was only a mockery, and that in the eyes of God the man and the woman were violating the most sacred principles of morality. It declared, further, that, in spite of the sanction of the law of the land, all children of such an union were in the eyes of the Church illegitimate, the offspring of sin.

Now in a country like Ireland there have been many mixed marriages. Roman Catholic girls married Protestant men, and men who were Roman Catholics married Protestant women. Sometimes these marriages took place in a Protestant church, sometimes in a Roman Catholic chapel. The priests were much chagrined when one of their flock married a Protestant either in a Protestant church or in a registry office, but they could do nothing. As all the world knows, however, the present Pope, Pius X., is a deadly enemy to liberty of mind, and his encyclicals against Modernism shew his determination to crush out the slightest resemblance to independence of thought among those who regard him as their spiritual head. Perhaps this is natural. He is an Italian priest, reared in the narrowest school. He knows little of history ; his most ardent admirers admit that he has not even a nodding acquaintance with literature. It is generally admitted that he was elected to the Papal chair,

not because he has any particular gifts as a legislator or administrator, but because those who elected him regarded him as the man most likely to be the willing tool of those who wished to carry out an Ultramontane policy. Personally, a quiet, good, kind-hearted man, he is but a child in the hands of his advisers, who swear eternal enmity to Protestant liberties. Hence the publication of this decree in the British Isles. That it is monstrous and cruel, no liberty-loving man will deny ; but it exists. It is now a Roman Catholic law in the British Islands just as it has been in other countries which have been in subjection to the decrees of the Council of Trent.

By the declaration of this decree, therefore, the priest can go to a man and woman, the one a Romanist, and the other a Protestant, who have been married according to the marriage rites of the law of the land, but whose union has not been blessed by a Roman priest, and he can say to them, " You are living in sin." He can say to a Protestant woman who is married to a Roman Catholic, " You are no better than the women in the streets who earn the bread of shame." He can tell her that her children are bastards, and he can tell the husband that he is in danger of everlasting damnation by living with the woman whom he has taken to be his wife.

Now this does not mean so much in England, where our atmosphere is Protestant, and where we breathe the breath of liberty. We should tell him

that we did not care a snap of our fingers for all the decrees that the Pope might care to pronounce. For all practical purposes, from the English Protestant's standpoint, a pope's decree is not worth the paper on which it is written. It is a matter of words signifying nothing. In Ireland, however, it is different. In the last chapter, I have enlarged upon the power of the Church. The faithful Roman Catholic in the Emerald Isle *dare* not disobey the laws of that Church. They are binding, they are God-given.

In the province of Munster I asked a man in an influential position which law he must obey in relation to this matter, the law of the Church or the law of the land ?

" The law of the Church, most decidedly," was his reply. " The law of the land is human, the law of the Church is the law of God."

" Then this Ne Temere decree is the law of God ? "

" Undoubtedly."

" But don't you see the position ? The Ne Temere decree is not operative in Germany or Austria ; therefore, the law of God according to you is different in one country from what it is in another ? "

" I have nothing to do with that. When the Church enunciates a law, it makes that law the law of God."

" This Ne Temere decree was announced to become law at Easter, 1908. According to you, a certain

man and woman who were made husband and wife by our rites, were living in innocence and bliss before that date, they were living in the direst sin the day after ? ”

“ Most decidedly.”

“ And yet nothing had changed, except that the decree had gone forth.”

“ Excuse me, everything was changed. The announcement of the decree changed an innocent action into a great sin.”

Of course, it was impossible to argue against such a position, but the conversation I have recorded indicates how matters stand in Ireland. The man to whom I was speaking was regarded as a fairly intelligent man, and to an extent a guide to public thought. How, then, would this matter be regarded by the ignorant people who believe the priest to have supernatural power ? I almost hesitate to put it on paper, because it seems so absurd, but I was told by responsible people in Ireland that many peasants believe that the priests could change them into loathsome animals if they wished to do so. Be that as it may, the ignorant Irish Roman Catholic, and many who are supposed to be intelligent as well, regard it as awful sin to disobey the priest when he gives any commands. Moreover, everyone knows the priest's power in confession ; almost every Roman Catholic believes that to die without absolution is something to be dreaded beyond words, and that

to be refused the sacraments is tantamount to being refused salvation.

Consider, then, this Ne Temere decree in the light of this thought. Here is a man, a Roman Catholic, who marries a Protestant girl. At the time of his marriage, he is only a "nominal Catholic," and he consents to be married in a Protestant church. Presently the decree is enunciated, and the priest goes to the man and tells him that unless he is married again by a Roman Catholic priest according to the laws of the Roman Church, he is living in sin, and is in danger of everlasting fire. All the influences of the man's early training begin to work, all the chains which have been gathered around him from infancy tighten. The terrors of the Church get hold of him. He goes to confession, but can get no absolution. He is not allowed to participate in the sacraments, which to the believing Romanist is something terrible to contemplate. He is a pariah, he is condemned by the Church, and he believes that until the Church's curse is removed he is under the wrath of God, and in the direst danger of hell fire.

But this is not all. His companions taunt him, ostracise him. He is shut out from the haunts of his old friends. He is regarded as a leper. He is like a man standing on the brink of a yawning inferno.

What shall he do? If his wife will consent to

be married again all will be well. He speaks to his wife about it ; and she, being Protestant born and bred, refuses.

“ No,” she says, “ I have been married once, I will not be married again.”

“ But,” he urges, “ we have never been truly married.”

This angers the woman. “ Do you mean to tell me,” she cries, “ that I who was married at such and such a church am not your wife? That I have been for years living in sin, that my children are the children of shame? ”

The man says they are, and thus the seeds of dissension, anger, bitterness, and ruin, are sown.

The man goes to the priest again, who preaches the doctrines of the Church, and strikes if possible greater terrors into the man’s soul.

What will the result be ?

This is not a fancy picture as I shall now have to relate. As every reader of our newspapers knows, a little more than a year ago the details of a shocking event were recorded in our public press which aroused the slumbering passions of thousands. Not only was it dealt with at great length in the newspapers, but it was brought before the House of Commons and discussed there.

As this affair is supposed to bear directly on the question, “ Is Home Rule Rome Rule? ” it may be well to give it some prominence here.

During the time I was in Belfast, among the many ministers I saw was the Rev. William Corkey, M.A., of the Townsend Presbyterian Church in that city. He is a young man of perhaps a little more than thirty years of age, retiring, modest, quiet ; as far removed from the fighting Orangeman or the political parson as can well be imagined. Presently it came out that he was the minister who took a prominent part in bringing the case of Mrs. McCann to light. He told me that Mrs. McCann was a member of his congregation, and asked me if I would care to see her. I accepted his invitation, and on the following morning found my way to Mr. Corkey's house, where he had asked Mrs. McCann to meet me.

My first sight of her somewhat startled me. I had expected to see a somewhat aggressive woman of between thirty and forty years of age. Mr. J. Devlin, M.P., spoke in the House of Commons of the woman's difficulties with her husband as having nothing to do with religion, but with irreligion. He said it was a vulgar, sordid quarrel, and it was hinted by many that the woman was a bad lot, and was given to drink.

Judge of my surprise, therefore, when a young girl of twenty came into the room. There was no suggestion of the aggressive, blatant, quarrelling virago. The very opposite was the case. Quietly dressed, modest in demeanour, and somewhat

reticent of speech, she struck me as far superior to the ordinary cottage woman. Not a weak girl by any means. Her square chin, firm lips, and rather abrupt manner of speech suggested decision and a strong, indomitable will. One who would not be bullied, one who having made up her mind as to what was right, would be true to her principles.

I saw a photograph of her, too, one taken before she was robbed of her children, a bright, happy girl holding a baby in her arms.

This, as nearly as I can give it, is a picture of Mrs. McCann around whose name so much controversy has waged.

As so many garbled stories about the McCann case have been given, I will give here the true narrative of the affair as she told it to me, and as was attested to by Mr. Corkey, her minister, who sat in the room with us.

She was born and reared in Ballymena, and was, if I remember aright, a farmer's daughter. At the age of seventeen she was married to the man McCann by the Rev. R. M. McGilmour, in whose church she was brought up. Mr. McGilmour also married her, and baptized the two babies that were born to her. Mr. McGilmour speaks highly of her life as a girl, and wrote concerning her, saying, "Neither before nor after her marriage up to the present time have I personally known or heard anything against her character." Remember, she

was only seventeen when McCann married her—little more than a child in years. McCann was a Roman Catholic, but from what I can gather by no means an ardent one. The very fact that he was willing to marry a Protestant girl in a Protestant church would go to prove this.

For a time the young couple lived happily together (I had this from her own lips), and two children were born to them. Some time after their marriage McCann attended a mission that was held in one of the Roman Catholic churches, and I am given to understand that this mission led him to take his religion more seriously.

It seems that the couple lived in a Roman Catholic quarter of the city, and the life was so rough that McCann was led to take another house in a more prosperous quarter, and I have first-hand evidence to show that he took a real delight in preparing the new home.

Just before their second child was born Mrs. McCann went to her parents' home to be confined. While she was there McCann wrote to her in the most affectionate terms. I have seen the originals of his letters, and can speak confidently as to the loving words in which they were couched.

A few weeks after her return to her home a priest called on her, and told her that she was never really married at all; that she had been living in sin with her husband, and that her children were the children

of shame. He also besought her to be married again by a priest of the Roman Catholic Church.

You can imagine the woman's horror and anger. Any respectable woman, too, can sympathise with her in her determination not to yield to the priest's dictates. Had she been a weak woman she would doubtless have yielded, but she came of a Scotch stock and would not be intimidated.

As she said to me in broken, abrupt sentences: "I *had* been married, truly married, and I wouldn't be married twice to the same man. I wouldn't admit that I had been living with him for years without being married."

"And then? What then?" I asked.

"The priest told me it would be very easy," was her reply. "He said that if I liked no one need know anything about it, while if I wanted a grand wedding I could go to church."

"And you refused?"

"Yes, I refused."

Now, according to newspaper reports, Mr. J. Devlin, M.P., stated in the House of Commons that the Church of Rome had nothing to do, directly or indirectly, with the breaking up of this home; moreover, Mr. Devlin read in the House of Commons a letter purporting to be from an *unknown* priest, who said: "I visited the house for the first time in January, 1910. Neither then nor on any subsequent occasion did I inform Mrs. McCann that she

was not properly married, nor did I tell her she was living in sin, nor that her children were illegitimate."

There are certain things one would like to say about this. The first is this—Who is this unknown priest? What is his name? What are his *bona fides*, and why should he be believed? But more, what are we to say about those priests who have corroborated Mrs. McCann's statements? On January 30th, 1911, the Rev. Father Power wrote a letter to the *Scotsman*, in which he told first how kindly the priest dealt with Mrs. McCann, and then went on to say: "The priest's duty began and ended with a detailed statement that was intended to enlighten Mrs. McCann as to the real condition of a man who, through no fault of his, had sinfully broken a law which bound his conscience, but did not touch her absolute *bona fides*." Again, the Rev. Father Power says, in a letter to the *Scotsman*, on February 3rd: "The representation made by the priest has been fairly well summarised by Mr. Corkey." Mr. Corkey told the story to the press much as I have told it here, only in greater detail.

In proof, too, that the Church of Rome, and that Church alone, was guilty of breaking up this home, I will quote the sayings of two men which bear upon the case.

The Rev. Father Findlay, the highest authority on Roman Catholic law in Ireland, and a man of exceptional ability, says, in an article in the *New*

Ireland Review, referring to the action of McCann : " He was conscientiously bound to separate from the Presbyterian woman unless she consented to a re-validation of the marriage, and he is under the greatest obligation to see that his children are baptized and brought up Catholics."

The Rev. Father Hubert also, a well-known Belfast priest, preached a sermon bearing on the case, in which he defended the action of the Church. This sermon was reported in the Belfast *Northern Whig*. He said : " We consider ourselves messengers and ministers of God. Here we have a man whose soul was in charge of the priest. Could the priest stand by and not say to him, ' You are living in sin ' ? "

So much for Mr. Devlin's statement in the House of Commons that religion had nothing to do with the affair, and the alleged letter from the unknown and nameless priest which the newspapers recorded, and to which credence was given by so many.

But to return to my narrative. Of course the visit of the priest led to a disruption between the husband and wife. He insisted on being re-married. She refused. Then came the blow. The children were smuggled out of the house, and the man left his wife. For days the woman sought high and low for her children. She sought in vain. By whom they were taken, and under whose control they were taken, it is not difficult to imagine. Certain it is

she never found them, and she has never found them to this day.

Presently the man wrote her asking her to meet him at the "Black Man," a famous statue in Belfast. She went, accompanied by her sister. She pleaded with her husband to take her to see the children. He declared before God that he dared not. He could do nothing until they were re-married according to the rites of the Church of Rome. He said he had been living in sin for two years, and would do so no longer. He told her how the children cried for her, and repeated that he was willing to live with her if they were re-married, but not otherwise.

Thus they separated, and as far as I could gather, the wife has never seen the husband since. The woman, who had controlled her feelings up to this point, broke down here, and wept bitterly. And no wonder. It was one of the saddest narratals I ever heard. It is true the woman has been helped since. Kind friends have subscribed to a fund on her behalf, and she is now being trained as a nurse, but by this infamous decree, she has been robbed of her home, robbed of her husband, robbed of her children, and attempts have been made to rob her of her good name.

As Mr. Corkey says: "I do not blame McCann. He believed the Church had the keys of heaven, and he surrendered his wife rather than run the risk of the awful curse of excommunication. If you can

make an ignorant man believe you could put him in hell and keep him there, you could make him do anything. I do not blame the priest. He was faithful to his calling, and discharged a most unpleasant duty loyally . . . It was the papal decree that wrought ruin ! ”

The picture of that poor girl has haunted me ever since I left the house. A young girl, little more than a child, married at seventeen, who has been robbed of her home, robbed of her husband, robbed of the children to whom she has given birth with pain and anguish, and whom she loved with a mother's love, and left alone in the world. And this was done by the Church that dominates the larger part of Ireland.

There is little more to tell. An appeal, so it appears, was made to the Lord Lieutenant, who said he could do nothing. As some one remarks, “ All the power of the country's police could be used to find a lady's lap-dog, but nothing could be done to find this woman's children.” Presently, however, after time had been given to smuggle the children out of the country, Mr. Corkey told me that the Chief Secretary gave instructions to the police to search for the children. Of course, it was in vain. As one of the detectives who is a Roman Catholic told Mr. Corkey: “ We are fighting against the Church and we can do nothing.”

Where are the children ? If they are in a nunnery

or convent in the British Isles, they cannot be found. Our Protestant Government will do nothing to cause these places to be open to inspection. As we have repeatedly said, "Our convents are sealed houses." If the children are in one of these, therefore, the mother will never see them again. If they are taken abroad, they are in all probability under the control of the Roman Church, and therefore Mrs. McCann has little room for hope. The Roman Church defies all the machinery of our British laws, as well as their authority.

"But," says someone, "sad as the story may be, what has it to do with Home Rule? As a proof that Ireland is at present dominated by Rome, it is well-nigh conclusive; but these things are done not under Home Rule but under the Union. How would things be affected if Ireland were under Home Rule?"

This is the conclusion of the people of Ulster: If Home Rule were granted the Church would see to it that the law of the Church would be made the law of the State, then people would neither have redress nor safety. Under the existing state of things, the Church dare not do what they would be sure to do if a Parliament were established in Dublin. The Church would then rule unrestricted, and would see to it that Ireland was governed according to Canon Law.

"But"—and this I urged upon those who took

this view—"no Irish leader would claim that the Dublin Parliament should have the right to alter the marriage laws?"

In answer to this I was referred to Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill of 1893. During the discussion of that Bill the then member for East Down moved an amendment to "exclude from the proposed Irish Parliament the right of repealing or amending any law at present in existence, or hereinafter to be enacted by the Imperial Parliament, which gives legal effect to any rights or ceremonies performed by any Protestant church."

Mr. Gladstone opposed this amendment.

Mr. Balfour supported it, and said: "Gentlemen from Ireland must be perfectly aware that, according to the Council of Trent, according to the principles of the Church to which they belonged, a marriage performed in a Presbyterian church was from a religious point of view of no validity whatever."

Sir T. Lea (Londonderry) also said: "The leaders of the Roman Catholic Church . . . knew very well that, whenever the marriage laws came under discussion in an Irish Parliament, *the Roman Catholic Church would have its way.*"

A division on this amendment took place, and among those who voted against it *were Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Redmond, and all the Irish members.*

"Facts speak louder than words," said these Ulster men to me, "and therefore in spite of all Mr.

Redmond's talk about safeguards, we do not believe him. Whatever may be his own private views, he is under the domination of the Church of Rome, and he has to do what that Church tells him. Home Rule would be Rome Rule."

With regard to the *Motu Proprio* decree, about which there has been so much discussion, the attitude of those who oppose Home Rule is just the same. This decree, when couched in everyday speech, amounts to this, that no layman can bring a priest, or any ecclesiastic whatever, into the public law courts unless the case in which he is implicated be first brought before the Church courts.

That if any Roman Catholic shall, in spite of this decree, take such a step, he shall be excommunicated.

The following is an extract from the decree :—

" OF OUR OWN NOTION

" Concerning bringing Clergy before the Tribunals of lay judges.

" Though all diligence be employed in framing laws, it is often impossible to guard against any doubt which may subsequently arise owing to adroit interpretations of the same. . . .

" Doubtless the meaning of this section has been repeatedly declared by the Congregation of the Holy Office. But now in these times of injustice, when so little regard is paid to the immunity of ecclesiastics, that not only clerics and priests, but

also Bishops and even their Eminences the Cardinals, are brought into a court of laymen, the case altogether demands from Us that by the severity of the punishment, We keep to their duty those men who are not deterred from such an act of sacrilege by the gravity of their offence. We of Our own notion do ordain, and decree as follows :—

“ Whatever private individuals, whether of the laity or in Holy Orders, men or women, summon to a tribunal of laymen any ecclesiastical persons whatever, be the case criminal or civil, without any permission from an ecclesiastical authority, and constrain them to attend publicly in these courts, all such private individuals incur excommunication at the hands of the Roman Pontiff.

“ Moreover, it is Our will and pleasure that what has been ordained by these letters be established and ratified, notwithstanding anything whatsoever to the contrary.

“ Given at Rome at St. Peter's on the 9th day of the month of October, in the 9th year of Our Pontificate.

“ POPE PIUS X.”

Of course, the publication of this document caused a great stir among Roman Catholics, and although the Protestants of Ireland admit that at present it does not bear directly upon them, it is another argument to prove that Home Rule means Rome Rule.

Immediately after the appearance of the decree in the *Dublin Daily Express*, Archbishop Walsh dealt with it in an article of some seven columns in length. When he had read it, the editor of that paper was in doubt whether, according to the Archbishop's opinion, it applied to Ireland or not. The general feeling is that it does. Be that as it may, it is supposed to have become the law of the Roman Church, and therefore has the gravest application to those belonging to that community.

It needs but a moment's consideration to see how it would affect the course of public justice. If it became effective it would mean the practical immunity of Roman Catholic clerics from the civil law, and if Roman Catholics and Protestants were mixed up in a case in which some Roman Catholic priest were implicated, it might make it extremely difficult, if not altogether impossible, for the Protestant to get justice. On the surface it seems to press most hardly on Roman Catholics; indeed, it prohibits them from any direct appeal to the civil law against any Romanist cleric whatsoever, but in a country in which Romanist and Protestant are

constantly mixed up in commercial affairs, it may affect the latter as much as it affects the former.

Of course the Roman Church argues that no injustice would be possible, as the Church Courts would see to it that right would be done ; but the history of Church Courts is such that no one having knowledge of them would care to depend on them for even-handed justice.

As the *Dublin Daily Express* says in commenting on the matter :—

“ The Roman Catholic clergyman is thus placed on a pinnacle of sacrosanctity, from which it is safe to assert he will seldom or ever be dragged to answer for his actions in either a civil or a criminal court of law. The action of His Holiness is easy to understand. It is detrimental to the interests of any Church to have its clerical representatives figuring in the law courts. The Roman Catholic Church in particular seeks to enshroud its clergy in a halo of virtue, and much of its influence over the masses is due to this very fact.”

Here then is the Ulster case. If a Home Rule Parliament sits at St. Stephen's Green, it is bound to be under the dominion of Rome, and Rome would never rest until the laws of the Church were the law of the State, and it would see to it that what is now binding only on Roman Catholics, should apply to Protestants as well.

Be that as it may, I am, in stating the arguments

of the main bulk of the Protestants of Ireland against Home Rule, obliged to mention a decree on which they lay so much stress. Moreover, they urge that this is only another sample of the arrogance of Rome, and another link in the chain of argument which goes to prove that Home Rule would be Rome Rule. Not only, they urge, would Protestants not be able to get justice, but Roman Catholics would be more than ever enslaved by clerical forces, and Ireland would be more effectually stultified in its endeavours to arise from the Slough of Despond, in which for so many years it has been submerged.

CHAPTER V.

“ IS IT ANY WONDER ? ”

“ Is it any wonder ? ” the Protestants of Ulster have said to me, “ that we are in deadly opposition to Home Rule ? With us our religious liberties are more than our material possessions. Home Rule would mean the end of our material prosperity, it would mean the stagnation of our enterprises, it would mean the destruction of our credit, it would mean the flower of our young manhood leaving our shores, and going to lands where it could find liberty and justice. But this is not the chief thing. We are Protestants, we believe in Protestant liberties, our fathers shed their blood for them centuries ago, and it is because we have entered into the possession of this blood-bought heritage, that we have in face of tremendous difficulties made this corner of Ireland the most prosperous part of the British Dominions. We have nothing but the kindest feelings towards Roman Catholics as individuals ; but we hate Romanism, we fear its malign power, and, God helping us, we will *never*, NEVER submit to a Parliament which will be nothing

but a Committee obeying Rome's behests. We ask for nothing for ourselves, except to remain under the old flag, and to live obedient to the laws of Great Britain. Through the years, whilst the priest-ridden part of Ireland has been disloyal and turbulent, we have been loyal and at peace; while they have been lazy and thriftless, we have been industrious and thrifty; while they have been a weakness to the Empire, we have been a strength; while they have proclaimed their hatred for the mother country, we have shown our love and our fidelity to her; and while they have been like leeches sucking the life-blood of the body corporate, we have given of our best to sustain the National Life. They have been a weakness to the nation, while we have been a strength; and while they have been the open sore of British politics, our loyalty and love have been a healing balm. And now you propose to place us under the heel of the people who are ruled by an alien power; you suggest that we Protestants, to whom liberty is the very breath of our lives, should be placed in a condition of slavery by Rome.

“ Is it any wonder that we are in earnest, that we are determined, and that we will resist even unto the death against any such thing ? ”

“ We must be free or die, who spake the language
Shakespeare spake,
The faith and morals hold which Milton held.”

This was said to me a hundred times, and in a hundred ways, after I had heard their statements bearing upon the question whether Home Rule would be Rome Rule. The voice of Ulster was well-nigh unanimous in affirming that it would be so; and while several whom I saw in the city of Belfast protested that such would not be the case, the great majority of the people, at least ninety per cent. of the Protestant population as it seemed to me, protested that Home Rule for Ireland would mean a more complete reign of an Italian priest and his minions.

While I was in Belfast the Presbyterian Church was actively preparing for the great meetings which were held on February 1st. When the idea was first discussed, it was thought that it would be a small meeting, but the rivulet became a broad stream, and the stream became a mighty river. No less than 50,000 men gathered together at the great demonstration. It was not a political gathering, it was not a wild Orange demonstration, it was a gathering of serious men (for neither women nor children were admitted to the halls or churches), who met with stern faces and unflinching resolve never to bend the neck to the Church of Rome, which they are convinced is the meaning of Home Rule.

The men of the North of Ireland are called bigoted, and bigoted they are, if absolute conviction that Romanism means slavery of the worst kind, and that Home Rule means Rome Rule is bigotry. That was

the note struck at all their great gatherings, both afternoon and night on February 1st. I have had private letters attesting to the deep religious feeling pervading the meetings. Sir William Crawford, writing me on February 3rd, said : “ The meetings were most impressive ; the sight of 3,000 strong, serious *men* met in the Assembly Hall at two o’clock, and over 3,000 *other* men of the same stamp at 7.30, was almost overwhelming. The singing of Psalm xlv. almost seemed as if it would lift the roof. I am told that in the Ulster Hall, Mary Street Church, Roseway Street Church, Great Victoria Street Church, the crowds were quite as dense. I was much struck with the alertness of the entire audience, and when I asked them, as giving their assent to the resolution, to stand with uplifted right hand, they did so instantaneously, as if drilled from the platform. One could see nothing but hands.

“ If the Solicitors-General, both of Scotland and England, could have seen it, perhaps they might have hesitated about talking of ‘ coercing the rebels of Ulster.’ Queer sort of rebels ! We desire *nothing* from Government. Is that too much ? ”

I quote this as shewing their attitude towards Home Rule, and the strength of their feelings.

The question of Mr. Winston Churchill speaking in Ulster Hall was of course a burning question while I was there, and I took strong objection to the attitude they had taken.

“ Is it any wonder ? ” was their answer. “ You must remember that we are fighting for what we regard as dearer than our lives. Home Rule is not a mere political question ; we cannot think of it as an academic matter, as many English Home Rulers seem to regard it. They seem to think we are playing a game of bluff, and that we shall easily yield. If Churchill is allowed to come here without a set and deliberate protest on our part, and if he speaks at a meeting at Ulster Hall in the ordinary way, Home Rulers will repeat their parrot cry that our feelings against Rome Rule are not so strong as they were, and that we are being converted to that side. We regard this as a challenge to us, and we want to shew that we mean to take it up. It is the first step in a revolution, and we desire to shew our minds.”

“ Come now—revolution ! ” I said.

“ Yes, revolution. For it will be a revolution. We have made up our minds, and we shall not budge an inch. If a Home Rule Bill is passed there will be a revolution, and possibly a bloody revolution, too.”

“ Do you realise what you are saying ? ”

“ We realise it perfectly. Even the women and children will take up arms if needs be, and we are not afraid.”

“ But don't you see the madness of such a threat ? What could you do against a trained army ? ”

“ Would the English army fire upon us ? Would

English and Scotch men fire upon their flesh and blood ? Would England, which, if a plebiscite were taken would not prove in favour of Home Rule, allow the loyal and law-abiding part of Ireland to be murdered simply because it desires to remain one with the British Government, and because it refuses to be governed by a set of political agitators who are the tools of Rome, and get their money from America ? We do not believe it. But in any case we mean to stand firm, and if we are driven to extremities we will fight to the very last.”

“ But that does not justify you in refusing to hear the other side. Free speech is one of the dearest heritages for which our fathers have fought, and which they have handed down to us. And yet you refuse free speech. You are afraid of argument.”

“ Argument ! We should not hear Churchill, and we are not afraid of his arguments. But we want to shew that we are in earnest.”

“ But it is not cricket ; it is not sportsmanlike. We are not a nation of savages, but of free people, and it is one of the laws of civilisation to give the other side a fair hearing. And you have broken that law ; you have done that which you condemn people in the south of Ireland for doing.”

“ I tell you that on the eve of a possible revolution such as this we are justified ” ; and not one of the men with whom I spoke could be moved from this position.

“ Is it any wonder ? ” they repeated again and again. “ What would you do in England if you felt you were in danger of being handed over to a foreign power, which meant the destruction of the business you had been building up through the years ? If it meant the violation of liberties which were as the breath of your life, and which would finally mean the overthrow of your faith ? ”

“ You cannot destroy faith so easily,” was my reply. “ The Duke of Alva and all the powers of Spain could not destroy the faith of Holland.”

“ No, but they butchered many thousands, they deluged the land in blood. Why, think of the condition of Quebec ! What has Rome done there ? The Protestant population of that city is not half of what it was a few years ago. The Romanists have just squeezed them out, made it impossible for them to live. That is what they would do in Ireland under Home Rule.”

“ But do you think if a Home Rule Bill were to be passed that you could resist the power of Great Britain ? Don’t you see what you are doing ? ”

“ We see perfectly what we are doing, but we do not think you quite understand the class of people you are trying to coerce. We are in deadly opposition to this business, and nothing will move us. You remember the riots of 1886, when Gladstone brought in his first Home Rule Bill. Do you know what took place ? There were 103 killed, and over

a thousand wounded. Some of us visited the hospital, and the place was a perfect hell. Do you think you have any right to turn Belfast into a hell again, for that is what you will do ? "

" Even now," said a large employer of labour to me, " the very shadow of Home Rule has brought estrangement among my workpeople, it is causing bitterness and anger. There has been no open trouble yet, but the fires, although smouldering, are there. All this is bad for the city, bad for the common weal."

" Remember this, too," said another, " our opposition is different now from what it was in 1886. Then the riots took place among the working classes, now you would find the most respected of our citizens would revolt."

" But think of the general results," I urged, "and remember this, too, the Government of a great country like ours cannot be intimidated."

" There is passive resistance as well as active resistance," was the reply.

" What do you mean by passive resistance ? "

" The Nonconformists of England showed us after Balfour's Education Bill was passed."

" Which you Unionists of Ulster helped him to pass," I retorted.

" Yes, and many of us are ashamed of it, for the main bulk of the Presbyterians of Ulster are with you in everything but this Home Rule question. But

you must remember that the Unionist party have ostensibly supported our cause, while the Liberal party have ostensibly supported Home Rule. And there is practically no other political question but Home Rule among us. But to come back to passive resistance, the Nonconformists of England resisted the law, and refused to pay rates."

" Yes, and the power of the law has worn down that resistance. Nonconformists feel as bitterly as ever against the Clerical rates without popular representation, which the Unionists forced upon them. But they could do little against the law."

" Ah, but our case is different. The Nonconformists only deducted a part of the rates, a mere fraction of it ; but we will deduct the whole. You did not disorganise political life ; but we will. It is hard to coerce over a million people ; in fact, nearly a third of a nation. Remember this : we pay the great bulk of the taxes, we Protestants, and no Irish Government could be carried on without us. Well, suppose Home Rule is granted, and we have Redmond for Prime Minister, Devlin for a Chancellor of the Exchequer, Dillon Education Secretary, and Tim Healy for Home Secretary ; of course the whole thought is ludicrous, but suppose we had some such arrangement, what would happen ? Taxes would be levied upon Ulster, upon the Protestants of Ireland generally. But we should not pay

them. That Irish Government would never receive a penny from us. Not one penny. What could it do ? "

" Why force you ? "

" How ? We shall fight as one man. Warrants would have to be issued, but who would issue them ? If they distrain upon us for our goods, who would sign the warrants ? If they tried to sell up our factories, our shops, our homes, who would buy them ? I tell you that to try to coerce more than a million people, and that million the most prosperous, the most intelligent, indeed the strongest and most capable people in a country, is a tremendous task. In fact, it is the testimony of history that you cannot coerce a free people, when that people is united and determined. No, do not be mistaken, the Protestants of Ireland have counted the cost, and they have made up their minds."

The Honourable Thomas Sinclair, an Irish Privy Councillor, and one of the most influential Protestants in Ireland, explained his position to me as follows :—
 " If the British people are determined to force Home Rule upon us against our passionate protest, we shall demand, on the grounds of elementary justice, and having regard to the province we have built up, after having been planted in Ulster by an English Government for State purposes three hundred years ago, that we shall remain as we are, an integral part of the United Kingdom, with unimpaired

representation in Imperial Parliament and subject only to its direct control.

“ Then, if this be not granted we shall go on with the Provisional Government. In either event—namely, whether we remain as we are, or whether we live under Provisional Government, we consider that we can best assist our brethren in the South, whose position we feel very keenly.”

These, if I read the people aright, are the sentiments of the overwhelming majority of the Protestants of Ireland. I offer no opinion upon them for the present, I only tell what I saw and heard, and we cannot judge of the value of any great constitutional change like Home Rule unless we understand the temper and tone of its people.

I shall never forget the quiet tones of one elderly man who spoke to me concerning this matter.

“ We people of the North are not an easily conquered people,” he said; “ I do not speak boastfully, I only speak of matters of fact—of history. Do you remember how after James II. had made his alliance with Louis XIV., his great hope lay in Ireland, and how he hoped by the possession of Ireland to gain back his ascendancy over England? Tyrconnell had been made general, and been raised to the post of Lord Deputy. The army had been remodelled, Protestant soldiers had been discharged and their places filled by Papists. All Protestant judges had been replaced by Catholics, and Catholic

mayors and sheriffs had been set over every city and county. Then the terror of massacre seized the people. Protestants in the South forsook the country, while those of the North drew together at Londonderry and Enniskillen. You know that for two months Tyrconnell intrigued with William's Government in order to gain time, then, William, being seemingly powerless, at the beginning of 1689 a flag was hoisted over Dublin Castle on which the words were embroidered ' Now or Never ! ' I tell you it was a fateful time, not only for Ireland, but for England. If James gained a firm foothold in Ireland, what might not have happened to England ? That flag at Dublin Castle called every Papist to arms, and James sailed from France to Kinsale. His first work was to crush the Protestants who stood in arms in the North. Fifty thousand men were gathered under Tyrconnell's standard, and twenty-five thousand of them were sent to Londonderry, where the bulk of the Protestant fugitives found shelter behind a weak wall. They had only a few old guns, and not even a ditch to protect them. But there were seven thousand men there ; seven thousand who, like the men of Israel in Elijah's time, had not bowed the knee to Baal, and would not yield. Think of it ! Twenty-five thousand armed Papists against seven thousand almost unarmed Protestants, and yet the seven thousand repulsed the attacks, nay, they made

the twenty-five thousand act on the defensive, and forced the Papists to turn the siege into a blockade. Many Protestants died of hunger in the streets, but those who lived still held on. More died of fever, which was the result of hunger, but those who survived still trusted in the Lord of hosts, and held out against the invaders. Time after time did the Papists command them to yield, and time after time they sent back the answer 'No surrender!' That siege lasted for 105 days, and only two days' food remained in Londonderry, but there was no thought of yielding, no not one. On the 28th of July, 1689, an English ship broke the boom across the water, and the Papists knew they were defeated. After that the men of Enniskillen turned the defeat into a rout : the routed soldiers fell back on Dublin, where James lay helpless among a number of Papists who were well-nigh frenzied, and although there was much terrible fighting afterwards, every step our fathers took was a step towards victory. Now, those were the men who saved Ireland for England, and those men were our forefathers. Do you think that we, their children, are likely to yield easily ? We are fighting for our liberties as they fought. We are fighting for our faith as they fought, and 'No surrender !' is our motto as theirs was."

What answer I gave to this I need not say, but I realised as I never realised before how deep was their

feeling and how firm and strong was their determination never to yield.

We may call them bigots if we will ; doubtless some of them are, but that they are sincere no one can question, and that they are strong and determined is obvious to the most careless passer-by.

CHAPTER VI.

DOES THE ROMAN CHURCH DESIRE HOME RULE ?

I HAVE dwelt at length on the attitude of the Irish Protestants on the question as to whether Home Rule would mean Rome Rule, and especially on that of the Protestants of Ulster, because I have been anxious to state their case in the strongest light. I do not think, moreover, if the question be viewed from their standpoint, that the strength of their case can be denied. It requires no subtlety of thought. To them Ireland consists of two races, having two religions. To give the country self-government would be to place all the power in the hands of the more numerous race, the race which through the centuries has been opposed to England. It would place Protestants under the subjection of Rome, which, as is well known, regards Protestantism with a deadly hatred. They quote the able and scholarly editor of the *British Weekly*, who asks Mr. Stephen Gwynn this question : “ Will he tell us of a single instance where a Roman Catholic majority has given justice to a Protestant minority ? We wait to hear.”

The case of Irish Protestants, then, and especially those of Ulster, is that Home Rule would mean Rome Rule, and as a consequence they mean to fight to the death.

But there is another side, and it is this other side that I am anxious to state with as much fairness and fulness as I have stated the other. But my task is more difficult, because the reasons which would lead one to answer the question, "Does Home Rule mean Rome Rule?" in the negative do not lie on the surface. Nevertheless, those reasons must be given, and the facts that support them stated.

During the whole of the time I was in Ireland, and since I have returned home, and have been thinking over the evidence on both sides of the matter, one question has constantly faced me. Does the Roman hierarchy want Home Rule for Ireland? Whatever else may be said about the Roman Church, no one will deny that those who guide its policy are astute men. Moreover, this is certain: whatever policy they bless is the policy which they think will be most favourable to the Roman Church. It will not willingly abate one jot or tittle of its power; it will do nothing and, if possible, allow nothing that will lessen its dominance or decrease its influence. With them the Church is first, the Church is everything. After all, Ireland is not a large question to the Roman Church. It is

only a little island with a population that has been decreasing for many years. Only in so far as it is associated with England has it any claim to greatness. Its people, that is its Roman Catholic people, are in the main poor, and cannot be of any great consequence to a body like the Roman Church.

To put it in another way, What has the Roman Church to gain by an Act giving Ireland Home Rule? Will it give that Church more power than it has now, will it give her a stronger hold upon the people, will it increase her revenues? Consider the position of the Roman Church in Ireland. It is freely admitted that nowhere else in the world can you find a people so amenable to the Roman hierarchy as in Ireland. No one associates Modernism with the Emerald Isle. None of its priests have, as far as I know, ever been accused of having "advanced notions" or "liberal opinions." If there are any, they dare not speak, and are so few in number that they are a negligible quantity. If the general opinion, as I found it in Ireland, goes for anything, the Irish priests are utterly devoted to their Church, and they are entirely obedient.

Could their position be improved? Could they under Home Rule have their way more completely than now? If Ireland had all its demands conceded, and possessed complete control over Irish affairs, would the position of the Church be improved one jot? Would it have greater control over the

DOES CHURCH DESIRE HOME RULE ? 91

education of the people ? Would its adherents give more largely or more loyally to the Church ; would it dominate the destinies of the country more completely than it does under present conditions ? Could it ?

I am pressing this question because it seems to me of considerable importance. For I would again urge this position : the Church only wants that which will mean its own aggrandisement and an increase of its power.

I give the following story for what it is worth. I have every reason to believe it is true. It was told me by a man who had it from the lips of one who was associated with it.

As is well known, Archbishop Walsh is one of the most influential men in the Roman Church in Ireland. He is highly respected, not only by Romanists but by many Protestants, and is regarded by some as a cleric with liberal sympathies. One day a member of the Senate of the New University, one of the very few Protestants on that Senate, and who told the story to my informant, was walking with the Archbishop. The Archbishop looked troubled, and his companion asked him if anything worried him.

The Archbishop admitted that his mind was far from restful.

“ What is troubling you ? ” asked his companion.

“ It is this Home Rule question,” was the reply.

“ Why, don't you approve of Home Rule ? ”

The Archbishop was doubtful if he did.

“ Why don’t you condemn it ? ” was the query.

“ Oh, there’s time enough for that when the Bill is introduced,” was the answer. “ We shall see what it really means then, and if we don’t like it, the thing can be easily killed by Convention.”

Admit for the moment that the story is true, and that the Archbishop said the words I have written down, what does it suggest ? The Church of Rome can only rule by the will of the people, and if the Church through him (the Archbishop) condemned the idea of Home Rule before the Bill was introduced, it would create a difficult situation. The better educated of the people would feel they were not fairly treated ; they would speak of it at public meetings ; general unrest would result, and questions would be asked. Such a state of things would be inimical to the welfare of the Church, for it would lessen the hold of the hierarchy upon the affection of the people. But if on the other hand the Bill were introduced into Parliament, and the Irish members came back to Dublin to present their report to Convention, what would happen ? The Convention, I am given to understand, is made up of representatives of the various societies : The Irish League, the Hibernians, etc. The Convention is called a representative body, but it is ruled by the Church. The Church pulls the strings, the Church decides its policy. This may not always appear on the surface,

but it is invariably the case. If therefore the Bill did not satisfy the Church it would be killed. The Convention would say that it did not satisfy the people, and it would seem as though the Bill were killed by the people, but in reality the Church would be responsible for its death.

This was what happened, as I was frequently informed by the Irish Councils Bill in 1906. When the Irish Secretary introduced it, he did so with the consent of the Irish members, but when its details were laid before the Convention, and the Church saw that it would mean the beginning of popular control of Irish education, it puts its veto upon it. Ostensibly the Convention killed it, but all the world knows that the voice of the Convention was the voice of the Church.

This, as it is believed by many to whom I spoke, is what will happen in relation to the Home Rule Bill. If it does not please the Church, the Church will try to kill it, unless it appeals to the popular mind so strongly that to kill it would weaken their hold upon the people.

All the same it is believed by many that the Roman Church is not at all strongly in favour of self-government for Ireland, and certainly when one considers the case fairly there are strong reasons for that belief.

What, for example, is the objective of the Church of Rome? Not Ireland. She has Ireland already,

and it is difficult to see how her power can be strengthened there. It is very rare that she obtains a convert in Ireland. The Protestants of Ireland are too strongly opposed to Rome ever to yield to her. The Protestants of Ireland *are* Protestant. They do not coquette with the Church of Rome as many do in England. Ritualism is almost unknown in the Episcopal Church of Ireland. As George Bernard Shaw says in his preface to "John Bull's Other Island"—"In Ireland all that the member of the Irish Protestant Church knows is that he is not a Roman Catholic. The decorations of even the 'lowest' English church seem to him to be extravagantly ritualistic and popish." Of course, Mr. Shaw is a man who writes too often with his tongue in his cheek to be taken seriously always, but in this he is doubtless right. The Protestants of Ireland—Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, Quakers, and Congregationalists—*are* Protestant, and are adamant against any approaches of the Romanist Church. As a consequence, the objective of Rome cannot be Ireland. What is it, then? As all the world knows, it is England. In order to convert England Pope Pius IX. sent Cardinal Wiseman to take ecclesiastical possession of England long years ago, and ever since then the Papal policy has been to spare no effort to regain her power in England. Cardinal Manning made no secret of this. "It is ours," he said, "to subjugate and

subdue, to conquer and to rule an imperial race. . . . Were heresy conquered in England, it would be conquered everywhere. All its lines meet here, and it is here that the Church of God must be gathered in all its strength."

If this is true, what would the Church gain by giving self-government to Ireland? Of course, it would largely depend upon the inclusion, or exclusion of Irish members from the English Parliament. But it can hardly be expected that if Home Rule is granted, Irish members would be allowed to legislate in purely English affairs.

If this were the case, therefore, it would mean the practical withdrawal of Irish members, the great bulk of whom are Roman Catholics, from any direct legislation on definitely English matters, and that would be a source of weakness, and not a source of strength, to the Roman Church. As all the world knows, Mr. Balfour's Education Bill, which placed Romanists upon the rates, was supported by the Irish party; indeed, it is believed by many that it would never have become law but for the Irish Catholics. Cardinal Vaughan, so it is reported, said boastfully when the Bill was passed, "We have dished the Nonconformists." Would the Church of England party have done what they did but for the help of the Irish? Again, when the Liberals came into power, and the present Irish Secretary introduced a Bill which was only a bundle of compromises, there

is little doubt but that he was influenced by the fact that the Irish members sat at St. Stephen's. No one regards the English Education question as settled. It must sooner or later come upon the *tapis* again, and the withdrawal of the Irish members would prove a tremendous disadvantage to the Church of Rome, when a new Education Bill is introduced.

Another thing has to be borne in mind. If the Home Rule question were out of the way, and Ireland had self-government, the minds of the people would be centred on their own affairs. Moreover, it follows as the night the day that two parties would spring up in Ireland as they have sprung up in other countries where self-government has been granted. There would be a clerical party and an anti-clerical party. Now, if Rome fears anything, she fears this, and she is wise enough to see the danger. During the last century nation after nation has slipped from her grasp through free and popular governments; and Ireland, Church-bound as she is, would be likely to follow in the train of France, and Italy, and Portugal.

I will not discuss this question here, as I shall have occasion to touch upon it again in another chapter; but it surely supports the doubt which exists in the minds of many whether the Roman Church really wants Home Rule for Ireland.

There have been many, too, who see in the two

Papal decrees signs that the Roman Church is not in love with the thought of Home Rule. Personally I do not attach much importance to it, but the argument which many adduce is this : The Church of Rome must know that the publication of those decrees could not be calculated to help Home Rule. Its representatives in Ireland knew very well that it would arouse the feelings of Protestants, and that it would be used as an argument for refusing to place Ireland under an Irish Parliament. They knew that almost every newspaper would attach great importance to it, and that its almost certain results would be heralded far and wide. Archbishop Walsh and Cardinal Logue knew the *furor* that was created by the McCann case ; they watched it step by step, and were aware of the deadly hatred to Rome which it aroused in the breasts of Protestants in Ulster. They were not blind to the fact that the Unionists of England as well as of Ireland would be likely to make the most of it, and that at every step in a Home Rule measure it would be adduced as an evidence of Roman aggression and Roman cruelty. Of course they tried to shew up the Church in its best light ; it was their policy so to do ; and yet only a very little while later the *Motu Proprio* decree was proclaimed. It is true, Archbishop Walsh wrote seven columns of ambiguous rhetoric to the *Dublin Express*, but he did not deny its application to Ireland, and he knew that his letter

would be a text for hundreds of anti-Home Rule speeches.

If the Roman Church wanted Home Rule, many urge that that Church would not have put such a strong argument in the mouths of their enemies, and thus have imperilled the chances of the thing upon which they have set their hearts. But they did allow it. The decrees have been proclaimed, and they have aroused the antagonism of millions of people. It is true, the Home Rule press have glossed over the facts, and some by silence on certain salient features have gone far to nullify their influence. But the facts remain, and thousands are saying, " If Rome will do this now, what will it not do when it has a Parliament in Dublin, and when the Government of Ireland is directly in its power ? " This being so, have not those who believe that the Roman hierarchy dislikes Home Rule, strong grounds for their belief ?

It is true that a Roman Catholic bishop told me that these decrees had no political significance whatever, and were simply proclaimed as necessary laws of the Church ; but I could not help feeling that he spoke in a very tentative way. Moreover, he is by no means a political ecclesiastic, and, as far as I could judge, would not be the kind of man to be consulted concerning the inner workings of the Roman hierarchy.

As I said, I do not attach very great importance to this argument, as from my reading of Church

history the Roman Church works in ways far subtler than this, and if, as it has been frequently said, the Jesuits dictate the policy of the Church, they would adopt something far less obvious than this. As a Modernist member of the Roman Communion said to me some time ago: "The ways of the Church of Rome are difficult to understand, and if it wanted to kill Home Rule it would do it in a far more subtle fashion. When it wants to kill a thing, it usually makes it appear that it does not want to kill it, and when the deed is done, it makes it appear that it was done in spite of its behests."

Be that as it may, however, this argument is frequently adduced and believed by many, and while it is not of first-class importance, its supporters have, *prima facie*, a case.

Then there is something else to be borne in mind. Ever since Wyndham's Land Act was passed, the priests as a body have practically withdrawn from politics. Doubtless now and then they appear on Home Rule platforms, but as a whole they have withdrawn from the political arena, and from active politics generally. Indeed, an ecclesiastic of high standing in Ireland told me he very much doubted whether there was anything like a strong feeling among the Roman Catholic clergy in favour of Home Rule. He admitted that most of the priests were of peasant origin, and came from the class that most strongly supported it. As a consequence,

from the standpoint of National sentiment, and from early prejudice, they were in favour of it, but they did not publicly support it.

This is significant. Of course, I am quite aware that the Roman Catholic clergy would be somewhat particular as to what they said to me, especially as those to whom I spoke were fully aware of the attitude I had taken on Protestant questions. But the facts speak for themselves. First, it is generally admitted that the priests as a body have in the main withdrawn from the public advocacy of Home Rule. Second, the priests of the Roman Catholic Church are bound to reflect, broadly considered, the feelings and wishes of the hierarchy. There is not the slightest doubt that if the priests *did* feel strongly on the question, they would, unless they were forbidden by those in authority, express their feelings whenever they had opportunity to do so, for they would know that, especially in the rural districts, they control the sentiments of the peasants. And thirdly, I repeatedly heard while I was in the South of Ireland, that there was a very strong doubt among the people whether the Church as a Church were at all anxious for Home Rule.

Indeed, to urge again the question I asked at the beginning, Why should the Church want it ? Could it be better off under a Home Rule Government ? Could it have its own way more completely ? Has it not a thousand times more to lose than to gain

by Home Rule? and if it has, would it not be the height of folly for it to throw the weight of its influence on the side of that political party which is staking everything on giving it?

For it is a well-known fact—and that fact would be amusing if it were not so sad—each party, Liberal and Conservative, is afraid of touching the religious aspect of the question for fear of alienating the Roman Catholic vote. The editor of one of the most influential Unionist newspapers in Ireland told me that one of the prominent Unionist members of Parliament came to him with a sad countenance. He said: “We have been stultifying ourselves as a party, we have been emasculating our arguments by for ever keeping the religious aspect of the question in the background. We have been told that we must not speak of the religious danger of Rome Rule for fear of offending the Roman Catholic Unionist. And yet this is our strongest platform. As far as Ulster is concerned, it is the bed-rock of all our arguments, and we shall never win in this battle, unless we throw off this miserable encumbrance and fight the battle on the real battle-field—viz., that Home Rule would mean Rome Rule. Why should we hide our real feelings because we fear to offend the Unionist Roman Catholics?”

Of course, I am speaking only from memory, and do not claim to use his exact words; but I have

conveyed the sentiments which he expressed in far stronger language than I have used.

I have noticed this, too. The Unionist papers, not Irish but English, studiously refrain from using language that would alienate the Roman Catholic elector. On the day following the great Presbyterian demonstration in Belfast (and it must be remembered that this was wholly a religious demonstration, and was marked by the strongest denunciation of Roman tyranny), the principal Unionist journal we have in England, if we except the *Times*, neither in its descriptive article nor in its leader expressed the real Presbyterian feeling. It did not even condemn the *Ne Temere* decree, rather it justified it. It did not refer to the McCann case, which has so stirred the heart of Ulster ; rather it endeavoured to enlist the sympathies of the Unionist Roman Catholic for the Irish Protestants whose chief fear is the Church of Rome. It overlooked the fact that but for the religious difficulty the Ulster objection would melt away like snow before the sun, and sought to make it appear that the Roman Catholic Unionist and the Irish Protestant Unionist had a common cause.

In my letter to the Belfast paper, which I mentioned in the first chapter, I urged that the Ulstermen should come to England and reveal the true facts concerning Home Rule and Rome Rule, and in many of the letters I received, I was told that

they had received strict orders not to touch on the religious question, as by so doing they would alienate the sympathies of the Roman Catholic Church.

The same could be said of the Liberal party. The strongest Protestants, who hate Rome's policy, water down their arguments on education and other questions for fear of losing the "Catholic vote."

If the Roman hierarchy wanted Home Rule, if there was anything like a strong feeling for it, would those who in England condemn Home Rule fail to use this as an argument? As a matter of fact, it is extremely doubtful whether those who shape Rome's policy in Ireland do favour it. Indeed, I am inclined to think that they fear it, and wish it could be buried and forgotten. Mr. Sydney Brooks, in his very able article on "Aspects of the Religious Question in Ireland," which appears in the February number of the *Fortnightly Review*, puts the case very strongly. He says: "It may be doubted . . . whether the Catholic Church at all desires Ireland to be a very different country. As devout Roman Catholics, putting the Church before any mundane interest, they have every reason to be satisfied with Ireland, and the Irish people, and I will add, with the British Government in Ireland, just as they are. *From the point of view of the Church, there can hardly be any change which is not a change for the worse;*

in the eyes of a zealous hierarchy the Ireland of to-day must be very nearly the ideal country. The people dwindle, but the Church thrives ; emigration continues, but those who are left behind seem to yield themselves more and more to priestly guidance and authority. Convents and monasteries multiply, Irish missionaries scatter over the world, the wealth and power and property of the Church grow from year to year, and British statesmanship have thoroughly assimilated the maxim, that the road to peace lies in governing Ireland in and through the priesthood."

These are weighty words and worthy of careful consideration. I quote them because they come from the pen of a careful and unprejudiced observer, and because they bear out what became a conviction with me while travelling especially in the South of Ireland.

As I propose giving in another chapter, my reasons for believing that the Roman Church has the gravest cause for regarding Home Rule with apprehension if not with fear, I will not deal further with it now. I cannot, however, help quoting another passage from Mr. Brooks' article, because it seems so pungent and strikes so deeply.

" It would be perhaps," he says, " too blunt a way of putting it to say that the Church in Ireland is for Home Rule only so long as it is sure of not getting it."

The truth is the Church of Rome in Ireland is

playing a waiting game. Her policy there, as it has been in every part of the world, is the policy summed up in the lines of the famous song—

And whatsoever king may reign
Still I'll be Vicar of Bray, sir.

The one thought of the Roman Church is its own aggrandisement and power. Whatever laws are passed, she will seek to utilise those laws for her own advancement. If it suits her, she will endeavour to drive a coach and four through any Act of Parliament, as she has done in the case of the Irish University Act, and she will laugh at the safeguards as Cardinal Logue laughed at the safeguards in that Bill. Her power is great, but great only when the people are under her dominion. If there is anything she hates, it is a free people who dare to think their own thoughts, and act according to their judgment. She wants to think for them and judge for them. She is best pleased with a nation of intellectual slaves, who will unquestioningly follow her bidding. All through the ages the thumbscrew, the rack, and the faggot have been her instruments for dealing with free enquiry and the right of private judgment. As a priest in Ireland told me, "We only interfere with politics when questions of faith and morals are involved." But what political question under heaven is there of which the priest cannot say that faith and morals are involved?

It has been wisely said that you cannot argue with a prophet, and it is always a very dangerous thing to prophesy ; nevertheless, I have little doubt as to the course of events. Assuming that a Home Rule Bill is brought in at any early date, the Roman Church will silently wait until its details are known to the world. Doubtless Archbishop Walsh and Cardinal Logue know more about it now than is known to nine-tenths of the members of Parliament, but they will say nothing about it. By the time the particulars of the Bill are known to the world they will have made up their minds. If it does not satisfy the minimum of their demands, they will cause Convention to condemn it root and branch. They will say that it is only playing at self-government, and call it a sham, and an insult to the Irish people, and do their best to arouse popular antagonism to it. Possibly they will kill it as they killed the Irish Councils Bill. But of one thing we may be sure : the great question asked will be, " How does it affect the Church ? " and we may depend that if the Church is in any degree robbed of her power or her privileges, all the might of clericalism will be brought against it, and the reason given will be that it is opposed to the best interests of the people at large.

If the Bill gives a liberal grant of self-government, however, and appeals to the imagination of the people as the thing they have waited for, then the hierarchy, although not wanting Home Rule, will

not oppose it ; rather, those who are at the helm will take some measure of credit to themselves for forcing a Protestant Government to do justice to Ireland. They dare not oppose it, for they know that the time is gone when they can dare to oppose the will of a nation. Not that the nation would disobey, but they would know that the people would look upon them as enemies to the national sentiment. If the Unionists succeed in destroying the Bill, the Church will again make it appear that its leaders favoured self-government for Ireland, and will throw all the blame on English and Irish Protestants.

But of this we may be sure : the Church will seek to safeguard its own interests, and preserve its own power. It will seize upon every opportunity which any new conditions offer to uphold the claims of a power which is tottering in almost every Roman Catholic country in the world, it will hold tenaciously to every shred of privilege which it now possesses.

If the Roman Catholic Church can make Home Rule Rome Rule, we may be sure that she will. Never was that Church so greedy of power as she is to-day, and never was she so loud in her demands. Doubtless there are reasons for this. During the last half-century she has seen whole nations slip from her grasp, and she is eager not only to retain what she already holds, but to conquer new lands. Therefore, she will seek to hold what she has in Ireland

like grim death, and will fight desperately to obtain new positions of advantage. In this respect the fears of Ulstermen are not without foundation. Nevertheless, I believe the Church of Rome dreads and fears Home Rule. As I said, she will doubtless make the best of it, but it will be in the spirit of a man who makes the best of a bad bargain, who all the time seeks to recoup himself for what he has lost. She will not oppose it, because she dare not, but I am convinced she does not want it.

CHAPTER VII.

IRELAND HAS ROME RULE NOW.

IN considering the question whether Home Rule for Ireland would mean Rome Rule, one fact has for ever been forcing itself upon me. Ireland has Rome Rule now. No one who travels through Ireland, reads the newspapers, talks with its people, and studies its life, can deny it. It is like the word "backsheesh" to the traveller in Egypt—he hears it on landing at Alexandria, and it is constantly dinned into his ears wherever he goes. Years ago, when travelling in the East, I had experience of this. On my first landing, during the whole time I was in Cairo, when I went to the great pyramids and afterwards visited the far-off villages and ruined cities on the banks of the Nile, the word more frequently spoken than any other was "backsheesh." Children screamed it, women whined it, and men shouted it.

In like manner one is met with the fact of Rome Rule in Ireland. During my interview with many people in the three provinces of the Emerald Isle which I visited, the conversation invariably turned

to this one topic. Whether Home Rule would mean Rome Rule may be a debatable subject, but the fact that Rome rules Ireland now is certain. At Belfast people constantly harped on it. Home Rule meant Rome Rule. Why did it mean Rome Rule ? and the reply invariably given was " Rome rules now." There is no phase of life into which the Roman priest does not enter, there is no phase of life except in one part of Ulster that he does not control.

In Chapters III. and IV. I have tried to state the Ulsterman's objection to Home Rule, and the truth underlying all the facts, and statements, and arguments is this. The burden of the prosperous Protestant Ulsterman's protest was " Rome is our enemy, and Rome rules." When I went to Leinster the same truth was evident everywhere, while in the towns and villages of Munster the fact is still more apparent. The affairs of Ireland are dominated by the Church. Of course, other influences and forces are at work, but at the back of them all is the great power which dominates and controls.

It is an interesting fact, and no one can understand, or begin to understand, Ireland without realising it. It is not something obscure ; it is writ large all over the country. No one can study Irish history without being impressed by it. Statesmen may legislate, Parliaments may pass laws, and the nation's officials may seek to enforce them, but it is the Church that rules.

IRELAND HAS ROME RULE NOW. III

Think of the outstanding features of Irish life and it becomes apparent. Travel through the country from end to end, and it meets you at every turn. You pass through village after village, and you see standing amidst a number of squalid huts a great gaudy church, a comfortable presbytery, and very probably a large nunnery or monastery. From whence comes the money to build the gaudy church, the well-built presbytery, and the huge nunneries and monasteries? It comes in the main from the people who live in the wretched cabins. And just as architecturally the church buildings tower over the hovels, so does the priest, the Church, tower over the life of the people and dominate it. Rome rules.

Glance rapidly at the questions which naturally appeal to any one who takes an intelligent interest in the life of a nation.

Begin with education. Who controls the education of Ireland? It is true that a section of it is apparently controlled by the various Protestant communions, but in the main the man at the helm of Irish education is the priest, both in the elementary schools, in the training colleges, and in the universities. The priests of Ireland have, as we have said, between seven and eight thousand teachers absolutely under their control. They have almost unlimited control of the money paid to them by the State for the upkeep of the schools. There is scarcely a shadow of public control. The priest is not bothered

by committees or by boards. If the teacher is not the obedient slave of the priest, if in opinion or action he or she acts contrary to the will of the "spiritual father" of the parish dismissal naturally follows. What teacher dares to disobey? He is hedged in on every side. His faith commands entire obedience to his "pastor and master," and even if this were not so, his livelihood, his future career would be destroyed if he dared to have any opinions of his own. If a parish priest discharges a teacher, no matter on what pretext, what can that teacher do? All the Roman Catholic schools in the land are under the same authority, and therefore that teacher's career is blighted, ruined. As a consequence, the teachers are in the very nature of things the blind, obedient servants of the Church which rules.

Then the "atmosphere" of those schools is naturally "Catholic," and every child is not only trained in the tenets of the Church, but breathes the air of the Church. It is taught the most ultramontane doctrines in relation to the Church, and therefore it grows up obedient to the priest.

For the moment I am not objecting to this; I am only stating the fact, and it bears out my contention that you have Rome Rule in Ireland on educational matters. I do not see how, under any administration or any form of government, the Church could rule over primary education more completely than it rules now.

If you pass from the education of the children to the training of teachers, the same truth stares you in the face. The Church would not have its teachers trained in the same college as Protestants ; therefore, she obtained grants to establish five training colleges of her own under the *absolute management of the priests*. The Church begins with life at the fountain, and because she has done this, and continues to do it, she holds the nation in the hollow of her hand.

We have seen how she has dealt with the University Acts, and how Cardinal Logue's boast has become an actual fact. While, beyond all this, their great Maynooth College, which exclusively exists for the training of priests, is fed by the State. No less than £26,360 a year comes from the public purse to train young priests for their work. If this is not Rome Rule, what is ?

Then take the question of the newspapers. Of course, in Ulster, where you have a large Protestant population, you can have a free press. This also obtains in Dublin, where perhaps a third of the inhabitants are Protestants, and possibly in one or two other large towns ; but in the small towns and rural districts, the Church rules the press. Unless the newspaper is the obedient mouthpiece of the Church, it is killed. You hear, here and there, of the proprietor of a newspaper, or a large-minded editor, who refuses to subordinate the principles he

holds dear to the interest of the clerics ; he dares to think for himself, he advocates schemes for liberating and uplifting the people. He pleads for a regenerated Ireland. But he is rarely ever strong enough to do battle with the priest, who controls the purse, controls the opinions and consciences of the people. As a consequence, there is, as far as I can find out, but one opinion in the south and west of Ireland, Rome rules the press of the Emerald Isle.

One has only to give this matter a moment's reflection to realise the importance of this. The newspaper is a great educator. In England it is one of the most powerful factors for the dissemination of light. Almost every subject is brought under its purview, and every aspect of our nation's life is freely discussed. But not so in Ireland. Except in larger centres of population only one side of the truth is made manifest, and every thing which the Church condemns is kept out of the newspapers. It is almost impossible for the people to get a true idea of the thoughts that are surging in the minds of a free people.

All this is naturally bound up in another fact. The Church has the power to do these things, because it has almost illimitable power over the lives of the people. It is almost impossible to realise this unless you get into close contact with them. One day in the province of Munster I was introduced to a man who was described as a "good Catholic,"

who was also a man of "liberal opinions." As this seemed to be a rare phenomenon, if not a contradiction of terms, I was much interested in talking with him. He told me that he did not always see eye to eye with priests, and although he went to confession regularly, he took his own course on political matters.

"There have been times," he said, "when I have voted in opposition to the priest's opinion, and should do so again under similar conditions."

"But let us come to a concrete case," I said. "Suppose the question of education were involved. Suppose it was the priest's will that you should vote in a certain way on this matter of education, because it touched the moral and religious life of the child, what then?"

"Oh, in that case," he replied, "I should of course do what the priest told me."

It can be seen, therefore, how far this man's liberty went. As I have before stated, an eminent ecclesiastic told me the priest did not interfere with politics except in so far as politics touched the question of faith and morals. But what subject is there of any importance where "faith and morals" are not involved?

I cannot perhaps do better here than to quote some passages from a book which is widely read among the more educated people in Ireland, and which gives as true a picture of many phases of

Irish life as it is possible to find. It is a book entitled "Economics for Irishmen," and is written by a man who is an Irishman, who has studied the life of his country closely for many years, who is a Roman Catholic, and who is also a literary man, in the best sense of the word. He writes for at least one English review of high standing, and, as I was frequently informed, dares to tell the truth. He writes under the *nom de plume* of "Pat." In the last chapter of the volume he deals with "The Economic Influence of Religion." In this chapter he writes as follows :—

"One of the first economic necessities of Ireland to-day is to teach the priest in Maynooth . . . how to draw the line at making a secular instrument of his sacred privilege. Liberty is essential to character, and character is essential to progress, economic or otherwise ; but progress of any kind is plainly impossible in so far as one class of men dictates their liberty, their character, and their conduct in all concerns to all the other classes.

"A priest, well educated and spiritually alive to his mission, could hardly turn it into a secular instrument, and wherever we meet such a priest, he usually confines his privilege to its purpose, going into secular affairs merely in his character as a citizen, and accepting the conditions of any other man ; *but so rare is this that the public have come to regard the opposite as inevitable.*

“ I remember how, when a little boy, we regarded the ‘ black man,’ who inspired our awe, but never our love ; how we grew up to think of him as the only person whose judgment could have much value, in religion or in anything else ; how it was assumed as a religious duty that any attempt to differ from him, even about the parish pump, must destroy our business, or otherwise make ‘ us an example to the parish ’ ; how the ‘ education ’ we got under his ‘ management ’ made us despise industry, especially the industry by which we lived ; how he petted the child of the wealthy publican and ignored or intimidated the child of the poor peasant. In such circumstances, how is youth to develop character for initiative, for economic or social enterprises ? . . .

“ Teachers are snubbed by their priest for wishing to work little farms in connection with their schools for the benefit of the young peasants, but that is only a detail in the elaborate enslavement of the teacher, whose manager (the priest) may even send to the commissioners a ‘ confidential ’ report against him without affording him a possibility of defending himself.

“ The priest’s attitude is usually this : ‘ I am the Church ; therefore, when you oppose me you oppose the Church,’ even though the subject is only butter. The priest will neither leave lay matters to laymen, nor allow them to apply lay canons to him when he interferes. We give up our judgment to him in

theology, and he must have it as in butter and bacon as well. Very often the layman who would lead the creamery, or bacon factory to success, is exactly the one whom the priest dislikes, and lest the layman should succeed, the enterprise must fail ; to have the priest at the top, Ireland must go down. . . .

“ Nothing is more firmly fixed in the minds of many shopkeepers, and their peasant customers, than that the prosperity or destruction of their business is at the will of the priest, and I know numerous families that have been impoverished in this way, while others have risen from misery to wealth, through the priest’s partiality. In many places it is enough to know simply that the priest does not wish the people to go to a certain shop. The wish generally becomes known in some way, and then down goes that shop, often the shop of a good fellow, while a pious ruffian prospers under clerical approval at the other side of the street. . . .

“ I know a doctor who is told by his neighbours that they would prefer to employ him, but they are afraid, because the priest wants them to employ ‘ his own doctor.’

“ A man bought a farm on which the local priest had some acres from year to year. The new owner was willing to continue the arrangement, but the priest insisted on setting up a title of his own, in return for absolutely nothing. Because the farmer

would not hand over to him one hundred pounds worth of his own property for nothing, the priest organised a boycott against him, and on these facts he had a police hut near to his house for several years to follow. The priest's own parishioners knew very well the immortal tyranny of that boycott, but not a man of them ever dared to stand up for honesty or liberty against the priest. This time the victim was a Protestant.

. . . "A priest says, 'Any man that does not vote for my candidate is a black sheep in the flock.' Another says, in a 'sermon' about the 'Christmas collection,' 'If I find any one who does not pay I'll take care that he is exposed. . . . If I find any one does not pay more than a shilling, I'll have his name sounded all over the parish!'

"The boycotting examples are the most interesting of all. A layman differs from the priest on a matter of butter, bacon, or politics, and at once it is known 'that the priest is agin him,' the mob is let loose on him, many of them thieves, who regard it as a virtue to rob him, and who even if they go to gaol, are still 'on the priest's side,' under the redeeming approval of 'the only true religion.' The process is essentially cruel; its methods essentially savage, and the religion of Christ is employed by the priest as its driving power."

In connection with these instances, and many others which I have not space to quote, the writer

says, " Each is a case typical of many I have personally investigated, but there is no need to get individuals into trouble by giving names and addresses, for it will be readily seen that the facts are only such as can be found in most of Ireland. *I know of fifty to the one I mention.*"

Of course, to an Englishman all this seems like gross exaggeration, but to the Irishman it is commonplace. The question will naturally be asked, Why do not the people rise as one man and put an end once and for ever to such a state of things ? I reply that we do not know the strength of priestly dominance. Remember that the Irishman is essentially religious, largely superstitious, and that to him the priest's voice is the voice of the Church, and that the voice of the Church is the voice of God. He knows that the priest has almost unlimited power on earth, and he firmly believes he has the keys of heaven, and that through him alone he can obtain eternal felicity, but that if the priest is against him there is nothing but the ghastly torments of an eternal hell. When you once grasp that fact, you begin to understand Rome Rule in Ireland.

Again, this writer says : " Unlike any other kind of Christian the Catholic concedes to the priest all right of judgment with authority in religion—that is, the most exalting concession that one man can ever make to another, and one also representing a profound principle in Christian Ethics. In accordance

with this principle, the peasant may rise to the highest place in the highest temple, and the world has hardly a more beautiful example of faith than the grey patrician of fifty generations, bowed for the blessing of the new-made curate who may have started from the stable ; but when that curate has ' got his parish,' expands his exclusive judgment on religion into his exclusive judgment on everything else, lays down the law for patrician and plebeian together, dictates his policy to the statesman, his fees to the doctor, his voting to the citizen, their ' opinions ' to the public, and so turns his sacred privilege into a secular weapon ; then the highest things we know are dragged in the dirt, and character economic and otherwise is sunk under a confusion of standards that tend to make the individual a machine rather than a man, with heaven itself pressed into the process of human demoralisation. That is what we have to-day in Ireland——"

I have quoted at length from this writer because he knows Ireland intimately, and therefore can speak with an assurance and a certainty impossible to me. I have quoted him, too, because while he is a Roman Catholic, he has so far freed himself from the fetters of which he speaks as to dare to speak the truth. I ask the reader to weigh his words well, then I am sure he will agree with me, that in this—the most vital question of life—Rome rules in Ireland now.

From what we have seen, moreover, it will be easy to understand how Rome holds the purse of the country. I mentioned in a previous chapter that it was freely said in Dublin that Archbishop Walsh could break two of the largest banks in Ireland by a few strokes of his pen. Of course, this means that he is the trustee of the Church, and vast properties belonging to the Church are vested in his name. When one gives the slightest attention to Irish affairs it is not difficult to believe. On every hand is Church property, while the gifts of the faithful must be enormous.

Mr. Sydney Brooks, in the article in the *Fortnightly Review*, to which I have already referred, says:—

“ The Church is the second Irish landlord, and the yearly tribute it receives can be little, if at all less, than the moneys annually paid out by the people, in rent and purchase instalments. *What becomes of it all, no one knows.* The laity are excluded from the smallest share of Church administration, *and no priest in Ireland renders any account of the sums that pass into his hands.* One reads in the papers of an endless flow of bequests into the ecclesiastical exchequer, of the expensiveness of marriage and burial fees, and of the generous proceeds of the Easter and Christmas offerings, and of the half-yearly ‘stations,’ at which the priest collects his due in person.”

Let any one consider what this means, and he will

realise the enormous power the priest, the Church, has, and how it must reflect on the national and individual life. It will be easily seen, too, that the people depend on the priests for promotion, and for desired positions in life.

I was repeatedly told while in Ireland, that the priest is fully cognisant of the incomes of the various members of the flock, and very often of the condition of their banking account. Even in Government offices, where the amount of salaries is supposed to be secret, they have succeeded in learning the details of those salaries, and are thereby able to extract the utmost farthing from the faithful. It is also well known that Romanists, if possible, avoid the banks where the manager is of their own faith, while it is commonly said that a Romanist seldom becomes a bank manager. The reason for this is obvious.

As Mr. Sydney Brooks says: "The universal preference in Ireland for dealing only with the banks that have Protestant managers is due to the fear that otherwise the priest might learn the size of each customer's account, and increase his demands accordingly, and the Irish trick of looking and living below one's means, while it was fostered by landlordism and mis-government, is undoubtedly maintained by the dread of priestly exactions."

In this connection, as in nearly all others, the power of the Confessional plays an important part.

While visiting more than one house of Protestants in Ireland I found that the family conversed in whispers when any question of importance was introduced. " We have found it wise," they told me. " Past experience has told us that certain things have reached the priests' ears which could only have reached them through servants. More than once we have found that matters which we regarded as secret, and which have never passed our lips outside the house, have been known to the parish priest, and we have been absolutely certain that he could only have known them through the servant."

I need not enlarge on the power which the priest obtains over the faithful through the Confessional, while his knowledge of the private affairs of even others than his own flock is easily explained.

Be that as it may, there is not the slightest doubt that the priests' control over the money of Ireland is simply enormous, while that control makes Rome Rule in Ireland more complete.

In this respect, I am not for the moment blaming the priests. They do what they believe to be their duty, as instructed by the Church which is to them the great, if not the only, thing on earth. Neither do I hint that they are bad men. Indeed, from what I can learn, many of them are good, devoted, faithful men. The charges which are so often brought against Continental priests in the matter of sexual immorality rarely have any meaning in Ireland.

As a body they are absolutely free from this taint, and in so far as they are blameless in this respect, their influence is doubtless increased. I believe, too, that in thousands of cases they are loyal friends, as well as faithful pastors, of their flocks. But they would be more than human if they did not abuse the tremendous powers which they possess. We must remember, too, that the priest has in many cases become not only the spiritual as well as the temporal dictator of the people, but that he has become so because he is their traditional friend. At one time in Irish history, he was their only faithful friend, and because he has often been the only educated man in an ignorant community, he has been everything to them. Even now in certain parts he is simply everything to his flock. He is their spiritual shepherd, he is their teacher, general adviser, family lawyer, doctor, politician, land agent—indeed, it is difficult to say what he is not. In the past he was all these things almost universally, and therefore it is no wonder that the people yield to him.

Besides all this, the priest is in nearly all cases one of themselves. He came from their cottages, knows their struggles, and is therefore able to sympathise with them in these struggles. He does not come from the rich man's house as is so often the case in the Church of England; he belongs to their own class.

Added to this, he has in the past, at all events, often shared their sufferings, and more than once has died with his people.

Let all this be admitted, and gladly admitted ; for while power has often made him cruel and despotic, many priests are doubtless faithful. Nevertheless, things are as I have said ; their absolute authority over the community has, instead of producing a strong, sturdy, industrious, self-reliant race of people, resulted in ignorance, servility, superstition, and, as a consequence, decadence.

There are signs, encouraging signs, of an awakening in which one rejoices, and which I shall have to discuss later ; but at present the Roman Catholic part of the nation is priest-ridden, Church-ridden.

Take the points I have mentioned, and consider. The Church controls education, the greater part of the press, individual life, and a vast amount of the nation's wealth, how can it be otherwise than that Rome Rule should obtain in Ireland ?

But this is not all. When we discuss the question of Home Rule, we naturally refer to the government of the country. We think of the legislators, and of the laws that would be passed in Dublin. Those who fear that Home Rule would be Rome Rule say, and say very naturally, how can it be otherwise than Rome Rule, when at least three-fourths of the members of the new Parliament would be under the complete control of the Church ? How can it be

other than putting the Protestant Minority under the domination of the Romanist Majority ?

I insist, on the other hand, that you have Rome Rule now. Consider the legislation concerning Irish affairs any time during the last half-century, and what has it been but Rome Rule ? What has the Church of Rome wanted which the Church of Rome has not obtained ? What has become the law of Ireland that has not become so with the assent of the Roman hierarchy ?

It has become a standing joke in Ireland, or it would be a joke, if it were not so serious, that if you want anything done, you must first of all get the consent of the Church. The Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, the Chief Secretary for Ireland, have practically no power but what is allowed to them by those who speak for Rome. These highly-salaried officials quickly learn that in order to do anything they must have the Church on their side. The English Government, no matter which party is in power, is like a henpecked husband, who is legally responsible for everything, and who has to pay all the bills, but who takes his orders from his wife, and dare do only the things which she graciously permits.

We speak of our laws as supreme, and yet when the Church of Rome overrides them the Government stands meekly by and says nothing. We claim that the laws of the State concerning marriage are binding and authoritative, but the Roman

Church issues a decree that a marriage of a Protestant with a Roman Catholic, unless performed by a Roman priest, is mere concubinage, that it is not marriage at all, and that the offspring of such marriage are illegitimate. It goes further, and breaks up a home, and leaves a mother childless. But does the Government interfere? Does it condemn the *Ne Temere* decree? If it has done so, I have never heard of it.

After the McCann case was brought to light, a great meeting was held in London, at which a resolution was passed that the Prime Minister should be asked to receive a deputation on the *Ne Temere* decree. Did he receive this deputation? If so, what result has there been?

If the Presbyterian or the Episcopal Churches of Ireland had issued a decree having the same effect on life which this *Ne Temere* decree has, and the Roman Church had protested against it, as the Protestant Church has protested against this thing, would no notice have been taken? Would the Irish Parliament have allowed the matter to rest, until it had been repealed?

After reading what literature I can on the question, and after making the most careful enquiries I have been able among all grades of society, and among people holding all sorts of opinions in Ireland, the conviction has been forced upon me that it is almost impossible for Ireland (with the exception of Ulster)

to be more under Rome Rule than it is at present. To quote Mr. Sydney Brooks again: "*Protestant government is indeed one of the main bulwarks of the secular power of Irish Catholicism. Every official in the country, from the Lord Lieutenant to an inspector on the staff of a Board of Works, quickly learns that to get anything done he must have the Church on his side. Every Secretary of State soon becomes aware that the bishops and their subordinates are their most useful friends or their most powerful enemies—and never more powerful than when they appear to be altogether indifferent and in the background—of the policies he projects. There is hardly a Board or Council or Committee anywhere in Ireland, outside of a corner of Ulster, that is not directly or indirectly swayed by clerical influence. Whatever party is in power in Great Britain, the Church acts largely as its intermediary in the government of Ireland, distributes no small proportion of the official patronage, and may always be sure that its wishes and representations will be listened to with the most cordial deference. Its hold over education is such as it hardly possesses in any other land.*" . . .

This would seem to explain why no steps were taken in the McCann case until the children were placed in safe keeping under Roman Catholic control, and it explains, too, the general belief that the Lord Lieutenant and Chief Secretary of Ireland are merely instruments doing the bidding of Rome, and

why the British Government is laughed at. The British Government only *seems* to rule Ireland. The Roman Church really rules. I can conceive of nothing more humiliating to any Government, and yet if facts prove anything, they prove this.

And here lies the reason of Irish troubles. Any country dominated by Rome has a cancer in its body corporate, poisoning its life blood, and drying the springs of its vitality.

Charles Dickens, in a letter to Mr. Foster, written from Lausanne in 1846, says: "I don't know whether I have mentioned it before, that in the valley of the Simplon hard by here, where this Protestant Canton ends, and a Catholic Canton begins, you might separate two perfectly distinct and different conditions of humanity by drawing a line with your stick in the dust on the ground. On the Protestant side, neatness, cheerfulness, industry, education, continual aspiration at least after better things. On the Catholic side, dirt, disease, ignorance, squalor, misery. I have so constantly observed the like of this since I first came abroad, that I have a sad misgiving that the religion of Ireland lies deep at the root of all its sorrows."

And yet no one can pass through Ireland, and meet the Irish people, without loving them. By nature they are a sunny-hearted, loving people; superstitious and emotional no doubt, but witty

and intelligent. They are not a sullen, sour people, but kind and forgiving; a people who under true influences could become a great nation. And God Almighty is for ever calling to them, saying, "Arise, stand upon thy feet," but they cannot, they dare not. The Church of Rome will not permit.

For Ireland is under Rome Rule.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHAT IS THE POWER THAT CAN BREAK THE TYRANNY OF ROME ?

IF what I have written in the previous chapter is true, if Ireland is under Rome Rule now, and every phase of Irish Roman Catholic life is dominated by Rome, the question naturally arises, What is the power that can break the tyranny of Rome ? As we have seen, Acts of Parliament avail little as long as the Roman Church can set them at defiance. While bishops and priests hold the reins of government on the one hand, and dominate the life of the people on the other, what hope is there ?

Lord Beaconsfield once said, "Countries are not governed by statesmen and parliaments, but by public opinion," and if the Church of Rome rules in Ireland, it is because they have an obedient people at their beck and call. Rome Rule will remain in Ireland until you have an independent people, a people who will dare to think and act for themselves unhindered by the dictum of priest and Church."

Here, then, is the problem that faces any one who tries to take an intelligent interest in the life of Ireland. Acts of Parliament will mean little except in so far as they tend towards the liberation of the intellect, the freedom of the soul. The Church rules through the people, not indeed through the people's active will, but by their acquiescence to the demands of the Roman power. What can set the people free?

The obvious reply is "Religious Liberty." But that only touches the surface. They hug the chains that bind them, because they believe that by breaking them they would be defying God, and condemning themselves to an eternal hell. There is no power on earth so subtle, so difficult to destroy, as priestly tyranny. The obedient Irish Romanist thinks himself free while all the time he is bound by ten thousand invisible chains. The man who fears the wrath of the Church is ten thousand times more a slave than he whose limbs are bound with iron chains, lying in a dungeon. The "good Catholic" is more under the control of the priest than ever was a South American negro under the will of his owner. Simon Legree could command "Uncle Tom's" body. He could do as he liked with it, but because "Uncle Tom's" soul was free he was powerless to touch it. Ireland has religious liberty now as far as Acts of Parliament can give it; according to the law the Irishman can, if he will,

defy the Church, but Acts of Parliament cannot free the soul. While that is in bondage to priestly ideas, the priest rules.

As far as I know the Protestant Church makes very few converts in Ireland. The Irish Roman Catholic is afraid to become a Protestant, afraid to demand the right of private judgment in religious matters, afraid to disobey his spiritual master because of the fetters on his soul. If one went to Ireland and urged upon a Roman Catholic audience the duty of thinking its own thoughts unfettered by Church or priest, he would arouse antagonism, he would be regarded as an enemy to God. The people fervently *believe* in the authority and power of the priest, and the light of knowledge has never entered their uninformed intellects. "Anything that is opposed to the dictum of the Church is opposed to the will of God," is an axiom of their faith. They are a religious people, and they cannot think of religion except through and by the Church, and thus they shut their ears to everything that the priest condemns. Their faith is the result of many generations of faith; it is an ingrained fact. The priest speaks with the voice of God, therefore they must obey. The priest has supernatural power, the priest holds their eternal destiny in the hollow of his hand, therefore his word is law, while the mighty Church at his back is a mysterious and awesome power which is greater than kings or governments.

When the mind is enslaved, when the conscience is controlled, Acts of Parliament are powerless. Added to this, the priest has obtained enormous power over the mundane affairs of life, and has often fought and worked on the people's side.

It will be seen, then, that the power of Rome cannot be broken in a day. The subtle power of Rome must be combated by a power that works slowly but surely, and will in the end lead to the enfranchisement of the mind, the liberty of the soul.

What is this John the Baptist that shall prepare the way of the Lord of Light and Freedom? What is the iconoclastic power that shall slowly but surely break the idols of the past, just as surely as Hezekiah broke the brazen serpent, and called it "a bit of brass"?

The power of responsibility, of self-government. There is one thing Rome has never been able successfully to combat, one thing against which she has been powerless—a responsible, self-governing people.

All history is false if this be not true, and no man can study the history of the Roman Catholic nations of Europe without realising it. What has destroyed priestly power and tyranny in Italy, and France, and Portugal? Education, self-government, responsibility. A little more than half a century ago Italy was as much a child of the Roman Church as Ireland is to-day. Her people were ignorant, the country was

split up into warring sections, the Pope was not only spiritual but temporal ruler over a large part of the country, and the Vatican lay at the heart of the nation. Then Mazzini, and Cavour, and Kossuth, and others, arose and sowed the seeds of truth and liberty. But for these sowers Garibaldi would have been powerless. Little by little the people of Italy gained self-government, they became responsible, and from that time the shackles of the Church fell off. Of course, it was not done in a day, but it was done. To-day, Italy, the home of the Vatican, is perhaps as free from the dictum of the priest as any nation in Europe. In France the power which destroyed priestly terrors was the power of responsibility, and the enlightenment which came through it. Of course, it was realised in a different way, and the nation became deluged in blood before its emancipation came, and no one can read the history of France during the Reign of Terror without a shudder. But what of the Reign of Terror before the Revolution when the country was governed by the Aristocracy and the Church ? What of that Reign of Terror when, because a man did not fall on his knees at the passing of a religious procession, he was hanged and quartered after suffering unnameable outrages ? I know it will be urged, as it has been urged, that throwing off the authority of the Roman Church meant years of wild infidelity and ghastly sacrilege. I know that

Paris set up a lewd woman as the Goddess of Reason at whose shrine it worshipped, while the people danced wild dances as the Marseillaise was played in the Paris churches. But against this it must be said that here was only the natural revolt against spiritual tyranny and the intellectual slavery under which they had suffered. Has France less *real* faith to-day, than it had during the time of the Louis', when every decency of life was outraged, and religion was a cloak in which to serve the devil? Can anything be worse than that terrible period when all rights of humanity were set at naught, and the common people were treated worse than we should treat snarling dogs, under the name of religion? And now that a century has passed away, is not France infinitely better, infinitely more moral than she was when, with the blessing of the Church, the high places of France were so many brothels?

And I have no fear that light and liberty in Ireland would result in the same licentiousness as took place in France; not only has a hundred years passed away since then, but Ireland is a different country, and her liberty would express itself in a different way.

In any case, I am sure of this: responsibility has ever meant the awakening of the mind, the asking of questions, and these things have ever been the precursors of light and advancement.

In past days I looked at the question of Home

Rule for Ireland as a matter of political justice. *Prima facie*, it seemed right that the overwhelming majority should control the affairs of the nation. Ireland as a nation is as old as England, and has a history which, although often sad, is not without its romance and its glory. It is true it is a conquered nation, but it has never been easy to govern. It has ever been desirous of governing itself. We have given self-government to other parts of our great Empire, why then should not Ireland control its own internal affairs? Thus, on the face of it, it seemed just to grant Home Rule. But I was held back by one doubt. Would Home Rule mean Rome Rule? Would not the Protestants be crushed by an autocratic ecclesiastical power? That, and that alone, kept me from believing that Home Rule should be given to Ireland. It might be politically just, but was it right to hand over the nation to Rome? What about Protestant Ulster as well as the Protestants of the South? Was there not a greater justice than mere political justice? Could it be right to place almost complete power under the control of the Roman hierarchy who cared for nothing in comparison with the aggrandisement of the Roman Church? Could it be just to place the reins of a nation, Protestant and Catholic alike, in the hands of a Church which would seek only to advance its own purposes?

Now, however, I look upon the matter as some-

thing greater and more important than a question of political justice, great and important as that may be. The more I have thought about it, especially since my return from Ireland, the more I have examined evidences on both sides of the question, the more do I realise that the whole matter goes deeper. As the Protestants of Ulster have repeatedly said to me, it is a religious question from top to bottom. Settle that and all the rest could be adjusted. But Home Rule is Rome Rule. I do not believe it. The more I have thought, the more have I been convinced that not only does not Home Rule mean Roman Rule, but it means the one saving power from Rome Rule. If all the experience of the ages is not false, then directly a people has responsibility and political power, that people begin to work out their own salvation.

It has been urged that, while this may be true, the people of Ireland are not yet ready for such responsibility, and that it will be like placing power in the hands of a savage race. A few minutes' consideration will, I think, lead us to see otherwise. Ireland is not to-day the Ireland of fifty years ago, and there are signs of the times which not only shew that Ireland is rising out of the grave of its sloth and ignorance, but the events of the past twenty years are proving that the little responsibility which they already have has worked wonders in the life of the people. Moreover, there

are already clouds in the horizon of the Church, which although not bigger than a man's hand, yet shew that the floods are surely coming. Take two or three examples of this.

A few years ago the County Councils Act was passed. That Act meant taking the power out of the hands of jurors who were mostly Protestant magistrates, and placing a certain amount of power in the hands of the people ; immediately politics became a new thing to the Irishman. Local events revealed themselves to him in a new light. The appointment of a new master to a workhouse was a matter of importance to the people. It was discussed in the village streets, and lanes, and shops, and meeting places, and this fact, although it seems very little, has been an enlightenment to the people themselves. It has given them a deeper interest in the life of the country in which they are living, and that deeper interest has meant opening their eyes to things which they had not thought of before. In fact, the vote under the County Councils Act has meant to a large extent that the Irishman has been re-born.

Another thing, we must realise ; ideas, new ideas, have been slow percolating into the country. I know that education in Ireland is almost completely under clerical control. I know, too, that the most ultramontane things are taught in those schools. I know that all the teachers must, from the very

nature of the case, be the creatures of the priests, and that, as a consequence, the boys and girls, as they grow up to young men and women, are saturated with the idea of the divinity of the Church and the sacredness of the priest. But in spite of all this, their education has meant something. The facts of history, even although they may be coloured by prejudice, still remain a working force in life; the people have learned to read, and the reading has led to an acquaintance with the newspapers, and the newspapers, although also largely under the control of the Church, have brought a certain amount of light into their unenlightened minds. As a consequence, the Irishman is not as ignorant as he was half a century ago, and the lessening of ignorance has meant that he is less dependent on the priest for guidance and authority.

In addition to this, new ideas from England and from America have been constantly finding their way into the country. Years ago the ports of Ireland were filled with people going away from the old country, but during the last few years a large number of those who went away are returning home, not all of them to stay, but still to visit the old homesteads and to talk with the old companions. Intercourse with other countries has meant the bringing of light into the minds of the simple peasants.

An incident occurred some time ago which illustrates what I mean. A man came back from

America to his old home ; naturally, he was regarded as somewhat of an oracle. His old companions gathered around him and listened to what he had to say concerning the wonders of the new world. He went away a Roman Catholic, he came back a Roman Catholic, but the Roman Catholic of America is utterly different from the Roman Catholic of Ireland. He said to his old friends, " You remind me of Rip Van Winkle ; you have been asleep for this last thirty years ; you have not moved forward with the times."

" What do you mean ? " asked his old companions.

" Why, just think," was the reply. " Your priest is your master ; he is not simply your guide ; you are like little children, you have to do whatever he tells you ; you are kept in the dark about everything."

" We do not understand," said the villagers. " Give us examples."

" Well," he said, " what do you know about the way the money you give is spent ? A new school-room has been built. How much did it cost ? You do not know ; you gave your money, but you had not a word to say as to how that money has been employed. You have no power, no vote in anything done in the parish ; everything is done by the priest, and your duty is to pray, pay, and obey."

" But," said the Irish people, " what do you do in America ? "

"Oh," replied the other, "in America things are different. We built a new church in the parish where I was, but do you think we placed everything in the hands of the priest? Not we! We formed a committee, we appointed a treasurer, secretary, president, auditor. We knew everything that was going on; we were consulted about everything that was done, and the priest was no more than any one else. Of course, we are Catholics still, and we listen to the exhortations of the priest from the pulpit concerning spiritual things; but when it comes to other matters, we tell the priest to mind his own business, and we will attend to ours."

Of course this came upon the simple inhabitants of this village in Sligo somewhat as a thunderbolt. The idea that they should dare to have control over Church affairs was something too remarkable for words.

"But do you mean," they said, "that if the priest holds to one opinion, and you have another, you dare to tell him that he is wrong?"

"Certainly we do," was his reply. "I tell you, you are like Rip Van Winkle, you have been sleeping for these last thirty years while other people have been awake."

Of course, this presently came to the priest's ears, and naturally he was very much annoyed that the man from America should come back and utter such disturbing truths to his congregation, and a little later the visitor from America had the privilege

of hearing a sermon mainly about himself. The priest utterly denounced this man for coming back and disturbing the minds and faith of the people. He maintained that the priest should have absolute authority on all matters in relation to the Church and education in the parish, while the people should do as they were told, and then, looking towards the visitor from America, he exclaimed, "Sure, and I would rather see the devil come into the church than an Irish-American !"

Now this story was told me by one who had it from the lips of this said Irish-American, and although it may seem of little importance, it is not really so. From that time that little village was not so dead and alive as it had been before. The man's visit meant the coming of new ideas, and with new ideas a new spirit among the people. They are asking questions one of another, they are looking at things as they never looked at them before, and although this, of course, is a solitary instance, yet it is representative of hundreds more throughout the country. Slowly these new ideas—for they are new to them—are percolating through the Irish mind, and the people are being influenced by what is done in free and responsible countries.

Then other forces are at work which go towards liberating the mind. In past years the priest has demanded big fees at weddings and similar functions, and the people have paid without question, but now

they are beginning to ask questions. While I was in Ireland a case was brought before my notice. A man who shewed me much kindness in Ireland pointed out two shops to me. "The one," said my companion, "is kept by a Roman Catholic, the second by a Protestant. They were both young men, and they both decided to get married. The business of the two was about equal, and as they were both thrifty fellows they were equally well off. When the wedding day came the Roman Catholic found that he had to pay £50 to the priest in order to get married. The Church demanded it, the priest told him, and it was his duty to pay. The Protestant, on the other hand, had only to pay a guinea to his minister. The marriage over, the Catholic naturally asked questions. "Why," he says to himself, "should I have to pay £50 while the Protestant only paid a guinea? Why should the priest have the power to come into my home and demand from me this large sum of money?" Of course, he had paid the £50, but the fact rankled in his heart, and he with others is asking questions about it. Now thirty years ago they did not even dare to ask the questions, but to-day their whole attitude is changed. I do not say or suggest that they are in revolt against the priest. I expect no such thought has ever entered their minds, but they are asking questions, and questions are death to ecclesiastical authority.

Besides all this, the people are beginning to hate the slavery under which they live. They are seeing, just as other countries have seen, that Protestant lands thrive and become strong, while Roman Catholic countries grow weaker and weaker; they see that the Protestant is prosperous, while the Roman Catholic is in poverty. They ask why this is so, and they are beginning to say that it is because they have been impoverished; that their hard earnings have been taken from them to build huge and costly churches; that while they live in mud hovels, the priest has his comfortable presbytery. All this and more is disturbing them, and the fact is dawning upon their minds that the Church has been like a leech sucking the blood of the body corporate.

There is another fact, too, which is significant. For many years the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland has been demanding a university with a Catholic atmosphere, urging as a reason that the better class of Catholic young men of the country had no chance of a university education. When the new University Bill was passed, they thought that the young men who could afford a university education would flock to the Catholic colleges without question, and yet I am given to understand that never was Trinity College, Dublin, so full of Roman Catholic young men as it is at the present time. This year, so official figures state, there is a record

number of Roman Catholic students in the college which the hierarchy condemned as a danger to their religious life. Now, all these things taken together shew that while the movement towards liberty may not be very strong, yet there is a movement. Irish people are thinking, and their thoughts are leading them to demand responsibility, and if history means anything, it means that Ireland is beginning to wake up from its long sleep; that the call of other lands has reached the Emerald Isle and told them that morning is coming.

Now, then, what would happen under Home Rule? Suppose that this year a Home Rule Bill were passed, and that in the year 1913 a Dublin Parliament were set up, and Ireland had control of its own affairs? What would be the result? This first—Rome would take advantage of the new set of conditions and would seek to make those new conditions work towards its own advancement. Let there be no doubt that, while I believe that Home Rule would finally destroy Rome Rule in Ireland, I have no illusion about the fact that the Roman Church would try to make Home Rule Rome Rule. I feel certain they would grasp at every bit of power possible, and, it may be, make life hard for the Protestants. That has been the history of Rome for many generations, and I do not suppose it would falsify its history now.

Do not let us think that the people of Ulster

have had no ground for their fears, or that when they utter their grim determination, "We will not have Home Rule!" they have no reason for it. Ulster has reason for her grievous fears, and there is no doubt whatever that if Home Rule were passed, Rome would seek to make the Dublin Parliament the instrument for doing its own work. In saying this, I do not urge, or even suggest, that individual Catholics would do this if they were left alone. I am sure that Protestants and Catholics would live on the best of terms together. As far as I discovered, there is nothing but the kindest feelings towards Protestants by Catholics. As I have before said, the Roman Catholics of Ireland are a kind-hearted, witty, and loving people, whose nature it is not to do cruel deeds but to do kind ones, whose wish it is to live on the best of terms with their neighbours. I doubt whether in all Europe can be found a people less given to meditated revenge than the Irish people, and if they were left alone nothing but the kindest feelings would obtain between Irish Roman Catholics and their Protestant neighbours. But individual Roman Catholics must be distinguished from the Roman hierarchy. The Roman Church as a Church hates Protestantism, and because it hates Protestantism it is envious of the prosperity of Protestants. As a consequence, I am sure that it would seek to enforce marriage laws, which would bear grievously upon Protestant

hearts and consciences. I am sure that it would hold the reins of power with a tight hand. I am sure that it would try and get back all the old ecclesiastical buildings. I am sure that it would leave no stone unturned to make the whole of Ireland a Roman Catholic country ruled from Rome and by Rome.

But having said all that, I still maintain that Home Rule would be the first step towards a destruction of Rome Rule, because it would mean the beginning of a new era, an era of liberty, of enlightenment, and responsibility among the Irish people. Hitherto, politics has been something a long way off. The Catholic peasant has had no real interest in English politics, and hitherto the thought uppermost in his mind in sending the members to Parliament (when there has happened to be an election in the constituency in which he resides) is that he is sending men to demand Home Rule, to demand self-government. It has scarcely entered into his mind to consider what a Dublin Parliament would do. Home Rule is a national sentiment; the practical application of that national sentiment is a different thing, but if Home Rule were passed, then politics would become vital. These people would take a deep interest in what the Dublin Parliament was doing; the Land Question, Education, Government of the Church, Church Property, Taxation, would be brought infinitely nearer to him. He for the first time in his generation would take a direct part in

the government of his own country ; he would become a force in the Ireland which he so much loves. Then something else would follow, as surely as the night follows the day.

There are in Ireland, as elsewhere, Keir Hardies and Ramsay Macdonalds, men with democratic sentiments—with socialistic ideas too, perhaps, although Socialism is not yet a great power in Ireland—these men will tell him what working-men have done in other countries, and how, in face of opposition, they have obtained many of the blessings which are now unknown to them. On the other hand, the Church of Rome has never been democratic ; it has always been conservative, always craving for authority, and holding it fast with an iron hand. That Church would have its advocates in the country, opposing and fighting to the death anything like new ideas. Hitherto, in the main, when the Irishman has had to take sides, he has had to decide between Protestants and Roman Catholics ; as a natural consequence he has placed himself on the side of the faith of his fathers, and on the side of the men who enforce that faith. In the future, the opposing parties will be of the same faith, and he will be called upon to make his choice between the two. Of course, his priest will demand that he shall vote and use his influence on the side which he, the priest, represents ; but again the Irishman will begin to ask questions. He will see that the Church

will curse those democratic principles which have appealed to him as not only just but essential to the progress of the people. Thus before ten years are over, there will certainly be an anti-Clerical party in Ireland. That anti-Clerical party will probably be Roman Catholic, but it will be opposed to Clericalism. The Irish peasant will see that the Irish Church opposes him and opposes the interest of the common people. Both parties will have their newspapers, discussions will take place in the village street and village lane; doubtless strong words will be uttered; but what is more to the point, a new spirit will be realised, a disintegrating force will be at work in the life of the people, destroying old superstitions, opening their minds to new ideas, and bringing in the era of a larger life.

This may not come in a day, but it must surely come, and the advent of that new spirit will presage the fall of Rome. There will be no armed battalions, and no civil war, but a revolution will surely take place, and although that revolution may be bloodless, it will surely create a new Ireland. Old things will have passed away, and all things will have become new.

In the *Belfast News Letter* for January 22nd, 1912, I find the following significant passage from one who is evidently a strong Unionist, and who writes strongly from the Unionist standpoint. He says: "I would go further and say that just

in proportion as the Church of Rome tightens her grip on the people, in like manner is she nearing the time when the people will cast off her restraint as they have done in France and Portugal!" Exactly, but what will help them to cast off that restraint? What will help the Irishman, whose mind has been enslaved for so many years, to break his shackles? The merest tyro in history will know that there is no awakening power greater than that which comes through a sense of responsibility. Possibly, nay probably, there will be a great rebound from the Church which has so long held the people in chains. This seems almost inevitable; it was so in France, it was so in Italy, it was so also in Portugal, and even in Spain. If all one hears and reads is not a lie, the people are throwing off the yoke of their bondage, and standing erect in their new-found intellectual liberty. This I say is natural, it can scarcely be otherwise, and it may be that a period of revolt against organised creeds may be one of the means by which Ireland will work out its salvation. But, "we can do nothing against the truth but for the truth," said St. Paul. Personally, I have no fear that faith will die, because truth cannot be destroyed, and truth must in the long run prevail. Thus, although in her new-found freedom Ireland may do things which may disturb the minds of many, she will at length find a way to green pastures and still waters.

This may seem to some an optimistic dream, and yet if the reader will consider carefully, he will see that it is something more than optimism—it is a conclusion founded upon fact. Consider the state Ireland is in at present. To quote Mr. George Bernard Shaw's preface to "John Bull's Other Island" again: "Realise then," he says, "that the popular party in Ireland is seething with rebellion against the tyranny of the Church. Imagine the feelings of an English farmer if the parson refused to marry him for less than £20, and if he had virtually no other way of getting married! Imagine the Church Rates revived in the form of an unofficial Income Tax scientifically adjusted to your taxable capacity by an intimate knowledge of your affairs verified in the Confessional! Imagine being one of a peasantry reputed the poorest in the world, under the thumb of a priesthood reputed the richest in the world! Imagine a Catholic middle class continually defeated in the struggle of professional, official, and fashionable life by the superior education of its Protestant competitors, and yet forbidden by its priests to resort to the only efficient universities in the country! Imagine trying to get a modern education in a seminary of priests, where a modern book worth reading is on the Index, and the earth is still regarded, not perhaps as absolutely flat, yet as being far from so spherical as Protestants allege! Imagine being forbidden to read this preface

because it proclaims your own grievances ! And imagine being bound to submit to all this because the popular side must hold together at all costs in the face of the Protestant enemy ! That is, roughly, the predicament of Roman Catholic Ireland."

But go further and imagine the people free, realising for the first time power and responsibility, and seeing new avenues of prosperity before them with the light of a new day dawning upon their lives. Can we not see a new Ireland ? They have all their old characteristics of quick intelligence, a bright wit, a keen sense of humour and a vivacious nature scarcely known to us Saxons. Can we not see Ireland rising like Samson of old to shake herself free from the ropes which bound her. Can we not see her laughing at the old superstitions and defying those who had put chains upon her mind ? And can we not also see her moving towards the true and only Light which has been hidden by the dark clouds of mediævalism in which she has so long lived ?

CHAPTER IX.

IF HOME RULE WERE GRANTED, WOULD PROTESTANTS BE PERSECUTED ?

I HAVE been so uncertain of this, that for several years I have never been able to make up my mind about Home Rule. It has been urged upon me repeatedly by those opposing self-government for Ireland, that to give Home Rule to that country would mean the persecution of Protestants. It was stated that Roman Catholic hatred and bitterness were only held in check by the fact that the country was governed from England. "Once give Home Rule to Ireland," it was said, "once let there be a Parliament in Dublin, which must be subservient to the Roman Church, and Protestants will never be able to live." I received letter after letter from Ireland stating that if Home Rule were granted, Protestants would have to sacrifice their homes, their businesses, and to go to some land of freedom. It was repeatedly urged that the priests had such power over the people, and that their hatred of Protestants was such, that neither property nor life would be sacred. In the letter to

which I referred in the opening chapter, I said that if Home Rule meant Rome Rule, if Protestants would be persecuted, and that if the English Nonconformists could be convinced of this fact, Home Rule would be as dead as Queen Anne. That under no circumstance should Home Rule be allowed in Ireland, if a quarter of the population had to be crushed as a consequence. On the other hand, if it could be proved that Irish Protestants would have just treatment by the Roman section, then the case against Home Rule, as far as English Protestants were concerned, would largely break down. But that was the question on which I desired light, and concerning which the British public needed information.

Personally, I would be the last to advocate Home Rule : rather, I would fight against it to the very death, if it meant anything like crushing my fellow Protestants. Consequently, I was very anxious about this, and indeed it was largely in order to find out the truth concerning it, that I went to Ireland.

If granting what three-fourths of the nation desire, meant the persecution of those remaining, if placing power in the hands of a Dublin Government, meant destroying the industries, breaking up the homes, and ruining the lives of the most prosperous and the most loyal people in the Empire, then Home Rule would be something, not only to which we must object, but against which we must fight to the

bitter end. I therefore made the most careful inquiries in Ulster, in Leinster, and in Munster. Before going I made a list of questions which I thought covered the whole ground, the answers to which must lead to a correct understanding of the facts. In answering the question whether Home Rule would mean the persecution of Protestants by Roman Catholics, I wish the reader carefully to consider the facts which I shall now set down. Mr. Redmond, in an article on this question, repudiated the idea. He said that the Irish as a race were never guilty of religious persecution, and he challenged any one to prove that there had ever been any persecution of Protestants because they were Protestants by the people of Ireland.

I would like to bear my testimony to the truth of that statement. Of course, there have been times when mad passions have been aroused, when dark and bloody deeds have been committed. No doubt, back in the times of James II. deeds too awful to mention were done, and it cannot be denied that in after years revenge and religious hatred made Ireland a hell. The Irish are undoubtedly a wild and, under some circumstances, an almost ungovernable people; and in those years of strife and bitterness things were done which can only be thought of with a shudder. But this is true, not only of Roman Catholics but of Protestants. There has been bitterness on both sides; deeds of revenge

committed by both Romanists and Protestants. But that does not disprove Mr. Redmond's statements. Ireland is not a persecuting nation. The Irish are not a persecuting people. I do not think that any one who travels from north to south or from east to west, and tries to understand the life of this sunny-hearted, witty people, would assert that they are. During the visits I have made to that country, I have tried, as well as a stranger could, to estimate their true character, and I have been led to the conclusion that with all their faults and their failings they are not guilty of this. They may be lazy, they may be thriftless, they may be superstitious, but at heart they are kind and loving, and although they would at the bidding of their priests do things against which they would naturally revolt, yet the priests themselves would never dare to urge anything like a persecution of individual Protestants, except when the anger and rage of the people were roused by some great national strife. Doubtless, the Irish Roman Catholic is more true to his faith than the Romanist of any other country ; doubtless, too, he is completely dominated by clerical authority. But the Irish priest, although he may be bigoted and ignorant, is not by nature cruel. He, too, is an Irishman, and by nature full of the milk of human kindness. I believe that while he would strive with his Church for complete authority and complete power in the government of the

country, he would never be guilty of the persecution of Protestants as a class. I think, too, that I shall be able to prove that what I have said is not the outcome of my own imagination, but is true to the facts as they are written large over the face of Ireland to-day.

The Protestants of Ulster, in talking about this, have repeatedly assured me that they would not have so much fear for themselves, because they are in the majority, but they do fear for those parts of the country where Protestants are in the minority. "In the south, down in Galway, and Kerry, and Clare, where the Protestants are few in number," they have urged, "what chance would they have against the majority of Catholics?" It is a remarkable fact that the hatred of Home Rule is not nearly so strong in the South of Ireland where the Protestants are in the minority, as it is in the North, where they are in the majority. In Waterford, for example, Mr. John Redmond's constituency, the Protestants there are far less numerous than they are in Belfast, but they are far less violent in their opposition. It is true that in the main they do not desire Home Rule, but they utter no very strong opinions about it. This seems to me a significant fact, but what is more significant is that, although they live in a part of the country where Roman Catholics are at least ten to one, and where, therefore, from the point of numbers, they predominate

completely, Protestants are far more prosperous than Roman Catholics. Indeed, it is one of the most striking things that I know of. If ever you see a prosperous shop, a big manufactory of any sort, unless it be a place for the manufacturing of alcohol, you may be sure it is owned by a Protestant. If you see a big house you may be sure it belongs to a Protestant. In fact, I was told repeatedly that, although the Protestants formed scarcely a tithe of the population, the main bulk of the prosperous business of the town belongs to the minority. Yet their customers are in the main Roman Catholics. Protestants live by the good will of those belonging to the Roman Church, and if they were boycotted, their business would be ruined in a week. But it is not so.

A respected Quaker of that town told me he had done business there for thirty-five years. He is a Unionist, and is desirous of maintaining the existing state of things ; yet he admitted that, although at least nine-tenths of the people who come to his place of business are Roman Catholics, never during the thirty-five years had he ever once suffered any indignity or incivility at the hands of his Romanist neighbours. He had begun life there as a poor man, and he has grown to be rich, and he owes it to the good will of the people who were entirely opposed to him in matters of faith. Another man assured me that even in the two or three cases where large

shops were owned by Roman Catholics, practically all the heads of departments and managers were Protestants. Now, if there were anything like religious persecution, would it be possible that such testimonies could be given? How could a man do business in an almost completely Roman Catholic town, and succeed, as the Protestants of the South of Ireland have succeeded, if the fears of the North had any real foundation?

In talking over this matter one day to an Irishman (who is a fairly large landowner and a Unionist), he told me that instead of it being a disadvantage to be a Protestant, as far as success was concerned, in the South of Ireland, it was quite the opposite. "You see," he said, "these people regard the Protestants as their superiors, for where Romanists have failed Protestants have succeeded. As a consequence the ignorant peasant looks upon them with respect. To the Irishman prosperity is something to be admired, and therefore he looks with extreme admiration upon the man who has succeeded where he himself has failed. But not only this, the Protestant is held to be a man of moral integrity. After all, it is character that tells, and the Protestants of Ireland are regarded as more sober, more industrious, more trustworthy, and better educated than the Roman Catholics. Thus it comes about that as the Roman Catholics watch the lives of their neighbours, as they see their general integrity, their devotion

to business, their sobriety, and their faithfulness to their promises, they look upon them with so much respect, that it has become not a disadvantage but an advantage to be a Protestant. Of course, the priest could tell his people to avoid the Protestant shop and go to their own Catholic shop, but in the main he does not. If persecution takes place, or if boycotting takes place, it is not from religious reasons, but from something far other."

Again and again, even the Protestants of Ulster have told me that they have no fear whatever of the Irish people if they are left to themselves, because the Irish people are kind and charitable ; their only fear is of the Church as a hierarchy.

Let me give another illustration of what I mean. Some years ago a Roman Catholic priest in Ireland was led to give up his faith. The circumstances were made public at the time, and discussed not only in the Irish but in the English press. I had an interview with this gentleman while in Ireland, and he told me his story. He said that for years he had been living a double life. His intelligence told him that the Roman Catholic Church and doctrines were built on false foundations, but the blood of many generations of Romanists was in his veins ; the fear of the Church fought with his intelligence. Thus for years he acted as a priest of that Church, even while he had no faith in its doctrines. He was enslaved by long associations, and by the ingrained terror of

being faithless to what he had been led to think of as the one true Church of God. He knew too that if he left that Church openly he would be covered by ignominy and abuse, for to a devoted Catholic there can be few things worse than a renegade priest. He, therefore, planned his escape. He obtained a suit of layman's clothes, and then, taking a boat, rowed out into the Shannon as if for a bathe. Presently the boat was discovered without an occupant, while the priest's clerical garb was found in the boat. It was therefore given out that this priest while bathing had been drowned. His saintly character was also enlarged upon from pulpit and from altar, and he was spoken of as a godly priest of the Roman Church who had gone to his reward. Presently, however, this man returned. He had changed his faith, he had found the truth, as he believed, in a faith which his old Church condemned; but that Church could say nothing against him. It could not contradict its public statements made a few months before; nevertheless, naturally the bitterest of feelings were aroused. How could it be otherwise? As I said, nothing is worse, except it be the case of a nun who gets married, than for a priest to cease being a priest. That man eventually became a Protestant minister, he has a mission in Dublin, he has travelled all over Ireland conducting missions, and yet he is in Dublin to-day safe and unmolested. Of course, there have

been times when feelings have been aroused against him, and when he has had to have police protection, but these times have been rare, and the very fact that a man well known as a priest, and now well known as a Protestant minister, can go into the most extreme Catholic towns in the South of Ireland and conduct his missions, Protestant missions, unmolested, without persecution, and without bodily harm, goes a long way to prove that there is very little religious persecution in that country.

Another thing that goes to prove this ; my informant, who also was a most respected Quaker of the South of Ireland, told me that during over thirty years he had lived in a Roman Catholic town, he had only on one occasion known anything like a disturbance at Protestant services, and that was when the Salvation Army first came. The coming of the army, of course, created a great deal of interest, and many Roman Catholics were led to come to the services, and for a time there was strong feeling against its adherents ; but presently things settled down to their natural course, and the Salvation Army now conducts its meetings without fear of harm or molestation as freely as it does in England.

On this point I can quite understand that some will object and say, " What about the cases of boycotting and persecution which no doubt have been common in Ireland during the last few years, and

WOULD PROTESTANTS BE PERSECUTED ? 165

how can you say there is no religious persecution in the face of the incidents which are public property ? ”

I know that a section of the press teems with such incidents, and on the surface they are hard to reconcile with much that I have said. The examination of those incidents, however, goes to prove not that there was persecution or boycotting on account of religion, but because of agrarian or political reasons. Sometimes Protestants have been persecuted, sometimes Roman Catholics have been persecuted, in connection with some agrarian or political trouble, when party feeling has run high, but this has nothing whatever to do with my main contention that Protestants as Protestants have not been persecuted for many years, neither are they likely to be under any change of Government. If it were in the nature of the people to persecute, or if the priests desired to persecute for religious reasons, they would have had plenty of opportunities, especially in those parts of the country where Roman Catholics are in a large majority. On the whole, then, I think we can dismiss this fear from our minds. It does not bear the light of day.

In this connection I may say that I interviewed at least a dozen people in the South of Ireland both Protestant and Romanist, and without exception they laughed at the idea of persecution. “ Surely,” was their reply, “ the fact that Protestants are the

most prosperous people in Ireland, whether in the North or in the South, that they own nearly all the prosperous businesses, that they live in nearly all the big houses, and that they hold most of the permanent positions in the country, is sufficient proof that no such thing as persecution exists."

If further proofs were needed, the following facts are certainly significant. I take them from the Parliamentary reports, and they say that there are 807 Episcopalian Justices of the Peace in Ireland. But there are only 251 Catholic Justices, 157 Presbyterians, 38 Methodists, and 19 "various." As to the Lord Lieutenants and Deputy Lieutenants of Counties, at least eight out of every ten are Episcopalians. The Irish Privy Council consists of 43 Episcopalians, 10 Catholics, 9 Presbyterians, and 10 others. The Stipendiary Magistrates include 41 Episcopalians, 19 Catholics, and 6 Presbyterians. The Judges of the High Court number 7 Episcopalians, 4 Catholics, and 2 Presbyterians; whilst the Land and Estates Commissioners consist of 3 Episcopalians, 2 Catholics, and 1 Presbyterian. The County Inspectors of Police are 37 in number, of whom only 4 are Catholics, and nearly all the others are Episcopalians. It may be added that when the Conservatives went out of office in 1905, the Assistant Land Commissioners, Inspectors, and Assistant Inspectors, were constituted of 39 Episcopalians, 16 Catholics, and 12 Presbyterians, whilst the Recorders and County

WOULD PROTESTANTS BE PERSECUTED? 167

Court Judges included 10 Episcopalians, 8 Catholics, and 2 Presbyterians. The Liberal Government has since reduced the disproportion under the last two heads. Lastly, there are 174 Irish Peers, of whom only 14 are Catholics, and at least 150 are Episcopalians.

This goes to prove that the fears I had before I went to Ireland were groundless. On every hand, except in point of numbers, the Protestants' position is supreme. The Protestants are in the main masters, and the Roman Catholics the servants; the Protestants the employers and the Roman Catholics the employees. The Protestants are in a position of authority, while the Roman Catholics are in the main in positions of subservience.

Is it likely, then, that if Home Rule be given and the Roman Catholics realise the dream of their life, that they will be likely to persecute for conscience' sake? They have not done so when their hopes were unfulfilled, and the sky of their life black, how much less would they do so then, when the dreams of many generations became a reality?

It is freely admitted that the Protestant population in Ireland is the most enlightened, the most prosperous, the most virile; as a consequence they have obtained most of the positions of authority and wealth. Cannot the people having these qualifications take care of themselves? Even if Roman Catholics shewed a desire to persecute, and

there are no signs that such would be the case, is it likely that the people who have the brains, the culture, the wealth, and the commanding positions in the nation would be powerless to defend themselves ? Such a state of things is unthinkable.

CHAPTER X.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS.

IN writing the concluding chapter of this little book, I cannot, perhaps, do better than to consider briefly the two policies before us.

The first is the policy of Ulster, of those who would reject any thought of self-government for Ireland. What strikes any one who gives it a moment's thought is that it is purely negative. The cry of at least two-thirds of the nation is to be disregarded, the hopes of long years is to come to nothing. All the dreams that have been dreamt will be idle and the national sentiment trodden under foot. It is well to meet this matter fairly. The minority of Ireland will have their way, while the majority will be denied that for which they have been longing.

What will be the practical results of this? I am asking the question in no party spirit, for in this study I have banished all thoughts of party from my mind.

The first result will be that Ulster will remain

satisfied, and that her prosperity will remain unimpaired. This must, of course, be admitted without question. Whether it will be best for Ulster eventually must be considered later, but for the present that province, which has been noted for its growing population, its increasing prosperity, and general well-being, will remain the one bright spot on a "distressful country." Ulster's people will still live in their comfortable homes, and the forces which have gone to making the province, in the main, contented and prosperous, will remain. Its Lord Mayor will probably still be able to boast of the small pauper rate, the diminutive police rate, and probably of a growing commerce. The Presbyterian and other schools will remain under the same control, the churches will probably continue to be well attended, and the ministers will be able to do their great work unhindered by new and disturbing influences. Probably, too, a number of Roman Catholics from the South will move to this prosperous corner of the Island, and catch something of that larger life and broader outlook which is common among a people who have thrown off the chains of ecclesiasticism.

But what about Ireland as a whole? We must remember that in the Emerald Isle we have two distinct races, having two religions, and governed by different forces. It would be madness to legislate for one quarter of the people, however worthy and

whatever noble qualities they may possess, and leave the other three-fourths in a state of discontent to be governed by the same decadent influences. Numerically speaking, that would be a repetition of the old figure of the tail wagging the dog. As a consequence, if Ireland be refused her demand for self-government, there would be a great outcry among the Catholics of the South. Old wounds would be opened, old enmities revived, and the old discontent intensified. It is useless to say that Ireland as a whole, (of course excepting a part of Ulster,) does not desire Home Rule. I was told by those who opposed any change in the Government of Ireland that the farmers who had bought their land no longer desired self-government for Ireland. It may be so in a certain number of cases. I cannot say. This I know. Every farmer to whom I spoke, and I had interviews with several, were all eager for Home Rule. I remember one especially, a really good specimen of the peasant farmer, who had been able to buy his land under the Wyndham Land Act. He farmed something about sixty acres, and told me that while he could barely make a living in the old days of landlordism, he now managed comfortably. He had also become a member of the County Council, and took an intelligent interest in the affairs of his district. From the standpoint of worldly affairs, therefore, he was comfortably situated, and belonged to that class, which is spoken of as having changed

its views, and as desiring no longer Home Government for Ireland.

“ Do you still want Home Rule ? ” I asked.

“ I believe in it more strongly than ever,” was his reply.

“ Do your feelings on the matter represent those of men situated as you are, or do you stand alone ? ”

“ There may be other farmers situated as I am who do not want Home Rule,” he replied, “ but if there are, they are very rare around here. I know of none.”

“ And why do you desire it ? ”

“ Because we are Irishmen, and because we want to govern our country according to Irish ideas. We feel now that Ireland is governed by men who don't understand us, who are out of sympathy with the things which are dearest to us. We as a nation are as old as you are, and we want to feel that Ireland is governed by Irish people. There is only one Ireland for us, you know, sir. We want, as you may say, to work out our own salvation.”

“ And suppose Home Rule is not granted ? ”

“ Then, sir,” and the man's eyes hardened, “ there'll be all the old troubles. There'll be rioting and outrage and misery. You'll never have any peace, you can't have while Ireland is governed from England.”

“ But you don't mean that things will be as bad as they were, say, in the 'eighties ? ”

“ I don’t say that quite, but there’ll be terrible doings. The people are set upon it. Home Government is our right, sir, our *right*, and if we don’t have it now, then——” and the man looked away towards a miserable cluster of mud huts, as though he were picturing what the peasants there would do.

This man, as I was convinced, expressed the feelings of the people in the South and the West of Ireland, and as I reflected on Ireland’s past history, I realised that Ireland would not be a pleasant place to live in, especially for those who had opposed the national sentiments, if Home Rule were not given.

But to return to the question which I have all along kept in mind in writing these pages ; Ireland would still remain under Rome Rule, and the rejection of the people’s claims would mean the strengthening of Rome’s claims. As I have insisted all along, Ireland is under Rome Rule now, and if Ireland is disappointed in her hopes, she would be more under Rome Rule than ever.

Protestants in Ireland complain, and justly complain, of the power that the Roman hierarchy has in the country. In all vital matters, such as education, the Church is practically supreme. Fancy 6,000 schools under the *absolute* control of the priests ! Fancy more than 7,000 teachers whose whole professional career is at the mercy of men who contribute nothing to their maintenance. Fancy five training colleges, supported by the State, under

the complete control of the priests ! Fancy the Church dictating to the Government what she will have, and what she will not have ! Fancy Cardinal Logue laughing at the Government's " safeguards " in relation to the Universities Act, and telling the people that the Church will see to it that, in spite of all English Nonconformists can do, moneys voted for undenominational purposes shall be devoted to Catholic uses ! For that is what his boast meant. Fancy Maynooth College, after having received a huge sum towards its building, receiving between £20,000 and £30,000 a year for the training of Roman Catholic priests ! Yet all this and much more goes on under the existing state of things, and would continue if self-government is not granted.

I do not believe that the Church as a Church desires Home Rule. It is far better off as it is. Under no Home Government could she rule so completely, so absolutely, as she rules now. Under no form of self-government could she dictate her will as she dictates it now. And this rule would continue, and in all probability be strengthened, if the hopes of Home Rule were dashed to the ground.

This also would follow. The Church would make it appear to the people that she sided with them. As I have said in an earlier chapter, the Church is playing a waiting game. She is not, as a Church, expressing herself openly in this matter. Which ever way the scale turns, she means to win, but she

will have a far greater chance of strengthening her power if Home Rule is not granted. She will make it appear to the people that she has been all along on their side, and that she grieved that a Protestant Government refused their just demands. The Irish peasant, for his part, betrayed by the very Protestants who should stand for liberty and freedom, will turn back to his Roman champion with renewed faith and confirmed loyalty.

If I read the case aright, moreover, it would revive all the old bitterness between Protestant and Romanist. For to-day in Ireland the division of parties may be roughly divided into two camps. Protestant and Unionist on the one hand, against Romanist and Nationalist on the other. And the Irish peasant would be led to confuse Protestantism with Unionism, and would thus look on the Protestant as his natural enemy. If I know the Roman Church aright, moreover, she would encourage the thought, and thus, whatever friendliness has existed in the past, would be largely destroyed.

In this way, because the people were more than ever drawn to the Church, which they would regard as their great friend, Home Rule would be stronger than ever, the people would be more than ever under her control. And this would work out in a terrible way for the Irish people. Light would be kept out, liberty of opinion forbidden, and the Irish as a race would be debarred from entering

into that promised land of freedom, and light, and responsibility which alone can make a people strong and great.

Ireland would still be the open sore of British politics, while the natural and legitimate business of our British Parliament would be congested, and made almost impossible by the eighty Nationalist members who would in all probability hold the balance of power between the two parties. Of this I think there can be no doubt, and I do not envy the position of any Prime Minister in the House of Commons, be he Liberal or Conservative, who tries to conduct the business of State, while eighty disappointed and angry Nationalists, seek to give vent to their feelings.

Added to this, those eighty Nationalists will seek to advance the interests of the Roman Church in England, and make anything like a just settlement of our own ecclesiastical questions impossible. Our education anomalies will still remain, while the Nationalist votes will make Dr. Clifford's famous phrase "Rome on the Rates," more than ever a reality.

All this we must face and more ; but the chief thing that troubles me is that three-fourths of the people of Ireland will remain in the thralldom of Rome. The forces which would have caused the life-blood of religious freedom to flow through their veins will not be liberated, while the old

numbing, paralysing influences of priestly authority will still exert their influence over the minds and souls of the people. They may hear the cry "Come forth," but the stone will not be rolled away from the tomb, and even if it were their grave clothes will bind them fast.

I do not say that Ireland's regeneration will never come. A people intelligent by nature cannot for ever be kept in darkness. "The schoolmaster is abroad," even although it be the priests' schoolmaster, and a free press, even such as exists in Roman Catholic Ireland, facilities for travel, and the general dissemination of ideas, must slowly filter their way into Ireland. But it will be very slow. The clock of Irish life will be very nearly at a standstill, even if it be not put back for many years. Rome Rule will be the condition of Ireland far longer than it need to be, and subsequent history will proclaim to the British Government, "If thou hadst known even in thy day the things that belonged to thy peace. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."

And now let us look at the other side of the question. Suppose Ireland were granted self-government? Suppose that this Nationalist sentiment, which has existed so long, and been so strong in the Irish heart, were fulfilled?

If all history has not been a lie, the mind of Ireland would be awakened from its long sleep. Direct responsibility for the affairs of their own

country would quicken into life potentialities and powers lying dormant. That sense of responsibility, moreover, would give the Irishman new ideas of life, and finally lead him to throw off the shackles by which he has been so long bound.

As George Bernard Shaw says, in view of Home Rule becoming law, "the Roman Catholic Church—against which Dublin Castle is powerless—would meet with the one force that can cope with it victoriously. That force is democracy."

At least, it would be a positive policy. As I have said, the Ulster policy is purely negative. Under it all the old discontent and all the old trouble would remain. Nothing would be done to satisfy the longings of the people's hearts; nothing to meet the national sentiment. But if Home Rule were passed, at least an endeavour would be made to give them what they desire. It is possible that mistakes may be made in that new Bill; but he who never makes mistakes never makes anything. As a consequence, the feeling that England refuses to listen to their cry would no longer have a meaning and in that respect, at all events, their grievance would be taken away.

But what about Ulster? All along, the great difficulty that stands in the way of Irish Home Rule has been this province of the North. No doubt Ulster has a strong case, and I would be the very last to minimise it. We have to meet the question—

“ Shall we make Ulster discontented that the rest may be contented ? ” We cannot ignore such a Convention as was held in Belfast early in February. We cannot afford to close our eyes to the fact that perhaps the strongest and most influential body of people in Ireland, represented by 50,000 men, uttered their protest—a protest that was strong and grim and determined.

Sir William Crawford, who is not given to speak lightly, the head of the greatest linen manufactory in the world, the employer of many thousands of people, expressed their feelings in no uncertain terms. “ Fellow Presbyterians,” he said, “ we are here to pledge ourselves to do our part in this momentous crisis. I have no doubt that when the proposals of the Cabinet—now a dark secret—are revealed, they will be interleaved with paper guarantees and safeguards. I have no doubt that we shall have promises of freedom and toleration for all men from Nationalist leaders—leaders whose words were threats not long ago, and who are themselves at the mercy of forces they could not control for a single year. Let none of these guarantees or promises deceive you. A Dublin Parliament we will not have. Its laws we will not obey. Its demands for money we will throw into the fire. Our Nationalist countrymen may, if they so desire, establish their claim to manage their own affairs—they will not manage ours. Let an Irish Govern-

ment be formed. Let it send its officers here to take taxes by force: we will not pay. Our decision is final and unchanging. We trust in the God of our fathers and our duty is clear."

Words like these, I say, and from such a man, cannot be ignored; and, undoubtedly, Sir William Crawford and those who think with him, have grounds for their fears. As I have repeatedly urged, the Roman Catholic Church would undoubtedly seek to take advantage of the new conditions. Past history has shewn us what that Church desires. Losing power in almost every country in the world, it will seek to strengthen it in these British Isles. Therefore, the Ulster claim must be met. Personally, I would have nothing to do with Home Rule—except to fight it—if I thought Protestantism would eventually suffer from the change. But surely the British Parliament can do what is necessary? Ulster does not complain so much of existing laws, and its people seem to regard the provisions of those laws as sufficient to safeguard them.

Therefore, before any Home Rule Bill is passed, there must be laws making it impossible for a Dublin Parliament to interfere with their existing rights. All their marriage laws must be regarded as sacred; and there must be no possibility of any Dublin Parliament acceding to the demands of the Roman Church by interfering with them. Their position in relation to education must not be

weakened. At present they at least have control over the education of Protestants. That control must be safeguarded by the most stringent Acts of Parliament.

Undoubtedly the Roman Church has its eye upon ecclesiastical property once held by that communion, but which, in the course of events, has passed over to the Protestant Church. Long association, and many years of possession, have led them to regard that ecclesiastical property as inviolably theirs. Again, laws must be passed that no interference with that property shall be made possible.

In the speech from which I have quoted, Sir William Crawford refers to dangers to industrial life which will, he says, undoubtedly be the outcome of Home Rule. Every danger to industrial progress must be made impossible as far as laws can accomplish this.

Sympathising with Ulster as I do, respecting and admiring its strong, stalwart, loyal people, as any one must who has learnt to know them, I feel we can do no other. That people, which has made the North of Ireland a green spot in a commercial desert, cannot be disregarded. And so I say that it would be criminal for any Government to attempt to deal with this question unless by every power represented by an Act of Parliament it made them feel that their fears of the coming change are groundless.

But some one will say—"What is the use of safeguards when the Roman Catholic Church takes no note of safeguards? Having the Dublin Parliament under its control, it would laugh at them—even as it has laughed at other safeguards." But, surely, the objection is not valid. Even under Home Rule, Ireland would be a part of the British Empire; Ireland would be closely associated with our home life. The Imperial Parliament would always remain as their strong fortress. *Besides, if safeguards are of no use, of what use are existing laws?* The ultimate strength of any law resides in the power behind it—the Imperial Parliament. Indeed, I do not see, realising that the power of Great Britain is ever behind them to protect and succour them, why they need fear for their future under Home Rule more than now. The laws of the realm would still remain; and if such rigorous provisions were made for their safety as I have suggested, they could defy the Roman Church to do its worst, as much as, if not more than, they have been enabled to do in the past.

But, more than this, I do not believe Ulster would suffer. It will be remembered that, when Mr. Gladstone brought in his Bill for the disestablishment of the Irish Church, that Bill was protested against as strongly as a Home Rule Bill is being protested against to-day. It was urged that, if the Irish Church were disestablished, Rome would

crush Protestantism out of the land. The Episcopal Church painted all sorts of dark pictures of the future of religion if the Episcopal Church ceased to be the State Church of Ireland. But what has happened? After half a century has passed away those fears have been shewn to be groundless. Instead of Protestantism losing ground, it has gained. Protestantism was never so strong in Ireland as it is to-day—never so strong in numbers, in wealth, in position, in power, if we consider the population, as a whole.

If our Protestantism is real, we need not be afraid for it. It stands upon the foundation of truth, and while we are faithful we can defy the inroads of Romanism. It has ever been the case that a possible danger to Protestantism has drawn the faithful more closely together; it has meant renewed energy, greater devotion, and hence the forward march of the truth.

Think, for example, of the growth of Nonconformity in England. At the beginning of the nineteenth century it was only a small fragment of the population. At the close of the century it was more than fifty per cent. of the population! And yet it suffered under all sorts of indignities and difficulties. Nonconformists were looked upon as interlopers, and were seemingly regarded as having no right to existence. They were unjustly taxed. They were in apparent danger of being crushed out

by a privileged State Church. They were not allowed to marry their people or to bury their dead. It was demanded of them that they should support the State Church and at the same time maintain their own. Their people were poor and almost all their income came from the pockets of the working classes. Yet, so strong is the power of truth, that they became mighty, and to-day they form more than one-half of the worshipping community of Great Britain. Why, then, need Protestantism fear in Ireland? The Protestants form one million out of the four millions of the population; and it is readily conceded that that million contains the intelligence, the personal force, the wealth, and, to a very large extent, the leading minds in Ireland. Is it likely, then, that this one million, possessing such powers and occupying such positions, would be swept away before the other three millions, who, although three to one in number, are, for the most part, ignorant, unenlightened, and subservient to the will of the priest? Have Protestants no faith in their principles? Do they not believe in the power of truth—even although a Dublin Parliament legislated for them?

On the other hand, if what I have said in previous chapters is true, if the new responsibility, the enlightenment, and the strength of character which is sure to come through responsibility, break the shackles which have bound the Roman Catholics

for so long and make them a free people, will not their position be far better than under the numbing and paralysing influences of a mediæval Church?

I cannot, in dealing with this subject, refrain from looking at an aspect of the question which has no direct bearing upon my subject. I stated at the outset that I was not going to deal with questions other than the one which gives the title to this little book. At the same time, it was so often urged upon me that Home Rule would destroy the industry of Ulster that I cannot help looking at it for a moment. It was repeatedly stated, while I was in the North of Ireland, that a Dublin Parliament would mean two things. First, it would mean that an endeavour would be made to tax Protestants of Ulster out of existence; and, secondly, that Home Rule would bring about such a state of things as would make it impossible for Ulster to retain her great industrial position.

Look at those two points. First, would it be likely that a Dublin Parliament would try to tax Ulster out of existence? That Parliament would know that a large bulk of its revenues—the revenues on which it would depend for the maintenance of the country—must come from Ulster. It is there that its trade chiefly exists. The rest of Ireland is, in the main, agricultural; and save for its distilleries and breweries, there are practically no other means of industry. It is from Ulster that its revenues must

largely come. Is it likely that a Dublin Parliament would seek to "kill the goose that lays the golden egg"? Even suppose the Nationalist members had complete control over that new Parliament, they would know that the eyes of the world would be upon them, and they dare not, for their own sakes, do anything that would jeopardise their position.

But this is not all. How has the trade of Ulster been built up? I shall never forget my visit to the renowned York Street linen mills. It is, I suppose, the greatest linen factory in the world. As some one has said, "It clothes England in fine linen." It employs between five and six thousand people. To go through its many departments and watch how the flax becomes the linen that decorates our tables, makes one wonder. What the turnover in capital of this great industry may be, I have no knowledge. But when one of its largest owners said to me, "This would be all destroyed under Home Rule," I could not help thinking that the statement was utterly groundless. "What," I asked, "has built up this mighty enterprise? What has made the whole of Belfast so prosperous?" While the city of Cork has remained in poverty and its population stationary, Belfast has sprung from obscurity to greatness. What has made the city great? What has built up the huge industries of this city of the North? It has been the character of the people. The Ulster people boast that while the linen

industries were destroyed in the other parts of the world, they kept it alive in Belfast—and they did it by their strength of will, by their foresight, by their enterprise, and by their integrity of character. Nothing else could have made Belfast great or Ulster prosperous.

As I walked through the various departments of those great works, I was informed that nearly all the products were sent abroad. The trade of Belfast is, in the main, an export trade. Contracts for years ahead are made—both for buying and for selling. Now, then, suppose Home Rule were to pass. Suppose, even, that trade for a time were to be affected. Would the men who made the industries of the North allow all they have done in the past to be destroyed? Would they nullify all the contracts they have made? Would all these vast schemes come to nought? It is unthinkable. The force of character for which Ulster is so notable would remain, and the prosperity of Ulster would remain, too, as a consequence.

But more than this. Would it not also mean an increase of trade? As I have said, at present nearly all the Ulster goods are exported. The Irish people cannot afford to buy what they manufacture. The South of Ireland is poverty-stricken. But under the new conditions, with a re-awakened peasantry, with a sense of responsibility such as they never had before, with a new spirit working

in the lives of the people, we should have a new prosperity. There is no reason why the South and the West of Ireland should for ever remain in poverty. The Irish people have done well in other lands. In America they have risen to wealth and eminence and taken prominent places in the life of that great Republic. Why is it ? It is universally agreed that when they have left the atmosphere of superstition and oppression they have become the men God intended them to be. The power of Rome has killed the enterprise of the Roman Catholics of Ireland ; give them a sense of responsibility, give them the enlightenment which must surely come through self-government, and it will quicken their pulses and stir them to work out their own salvation. Thus, a richer South and West of Ireland would mean new markets for the North ; and, instead of Home Rule being a source of weakness to Ulster, it may become a strength.

But this, by the way. And I crave pardon for attempting to touch on a subject—not only outside the question discussed in this book, but outside my own domain. In looking back over what I have written, and again asking the question, “ Does Home Rule mean Rome Rule ? ” the answer comes in no uncertain way. I begun to study this subject, feeling that the cry of Ulster was right. That to give self-government to Ireland would be to place that unhappy country more than ever under the

dominion of Rome. But now, after having read much literature (more against Home Rule than for it); after having talked with many Irish people (more Unionists than Home Rulers), I am convinced that self-government is the one power which will break the tyranny of Rome. All history supports that conviction. Cardinal Manning said "that the true government of Ireland is in the bishops and the priests." That government must ever mean—as it has ever meant—decadence, corruption, and ruin. And the only power which can destroy the tyranny of clerical control is the power of an enlightened and responsible democracy.

I have tried to think of Ireland as a whole, and not of one part of it only, and I have tried to understand the dangers of self-government both to the North and to the South. I hope I have done justice to the Ulster position; if I have not, it is my misfortune and not my intention. I can quite understand its fears. Possibly, probably, Ulster, under Home Rule, would for a time be in the wilderness as far as public representation is concerned, as has already happened in regard to the County and District Councils, but only for a time. Probably, too, the Church of Rome will use all her influence, and it is tremendous, to unprotestantise the North. It is her policy to do so. But the Protestants of Ireland are not weaklings, and they will be like adamant in the face of encroaching forces. Ere long, too, they will

assert their true position. The power of a narrow ecclesiasticism is dying. It is doomed to die. Strength, virility, integrity, enterprise, and a mighty faith in the principles which have made Ulster great in the past, will be its strength in the future. That which has made Protestantism such a power, since Luther's mighty voice shook the world, still abides. Belfast and Londonderry and the towns and villages of Protestant Ireland need not fear, for there be more for them than against them.

But it is not alone of Ulster that I am thinking. "Pat," in an article he has just contributed to the English press, says, "The real problem is to restore the use of their wits to the Irish people. *We want peasant proprietorship in mental freedom. We want self-governorship for the peasant.*" Exactly; but how can they obtain this? I have tried to shew how.

But I realise the danger in mental freedom. In other Roman Catholic countries it has meant a period of revolt against organised creeds. It seems as though agnosticism were the inevitable rebound from a rigid ecclesiasticism. But the price of liberty has to be paid, and Ireland is bound to obtain her liberty; if not sooner, then later. But the revolt against iron-bound creeds need not be a revolt against the truth, and even if it be, the truth will be finally triumphant. Besides, there can never be a true manhood without liberty, never a great

national life without spiritual freedom. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." With this new-found freedom I can see Ireland standing erect, instinct with new life.

"It is a tremendous risk," some one will urge. But the essence of life is risk; and surely the hope of making a nation free is worth the risk! I ask the Protestants of Ireland to think of this. They have become great and strong through their spiritual freedom; will they not risk something to give that freedom to their Irish brethren? Already there is a glow in the Eastern sky, and many are daring to say, "The morning is coming." Shall we not meet the dawn with gladsome hearts? At any rate, I cannot believe that they will long entertain the fear that self-government for Ireland will mean the continued and perhaps the increased dominion of Rome. It is opposed to the very genius of their Protestant faith. Our forefathers were not afraid of liberty, liberty to all, and in their courage they became mighty, and left to us the heritage that is our joy and our crown. Surely this is the great opportunity of Irish Protestants. It is theirs to shew that they do not fear for the truth, and that their faith in the Gospel for which their fathers died is mightier than their doubts. Let them shew their priest-bound countrymen that they at least believe in a living Christianity, the essence of which is justice and liberty and love.

I am sure, too, that their fears are groundless. The movement of the age is towards the breaking of bonds, and setting at liberty those who are captive. And Ireland, which has been bound for many years, is asking for freedom. Perhaps its simple people hardly realise how that freedom will work out, and none of us know altogether, for the purposes of God are unknown to men. Be that as it may, however, every movement towards enlightenment, towards progress, and towards individual responsibility, whether civil or religious, is from God, and augurs the advance of the people. I cannot believe, therefore, that Home Rule means Rome Rule; on the contrary, I firmly believe that it will be the first step in the way of freedom from the bondage of Rome. It will break the shackles of the past, and usher in an era of liberty. And in my heart of hearts is the conviction that it will prepare the way for the coming of the Evangel, for which Ireland has so long waited.



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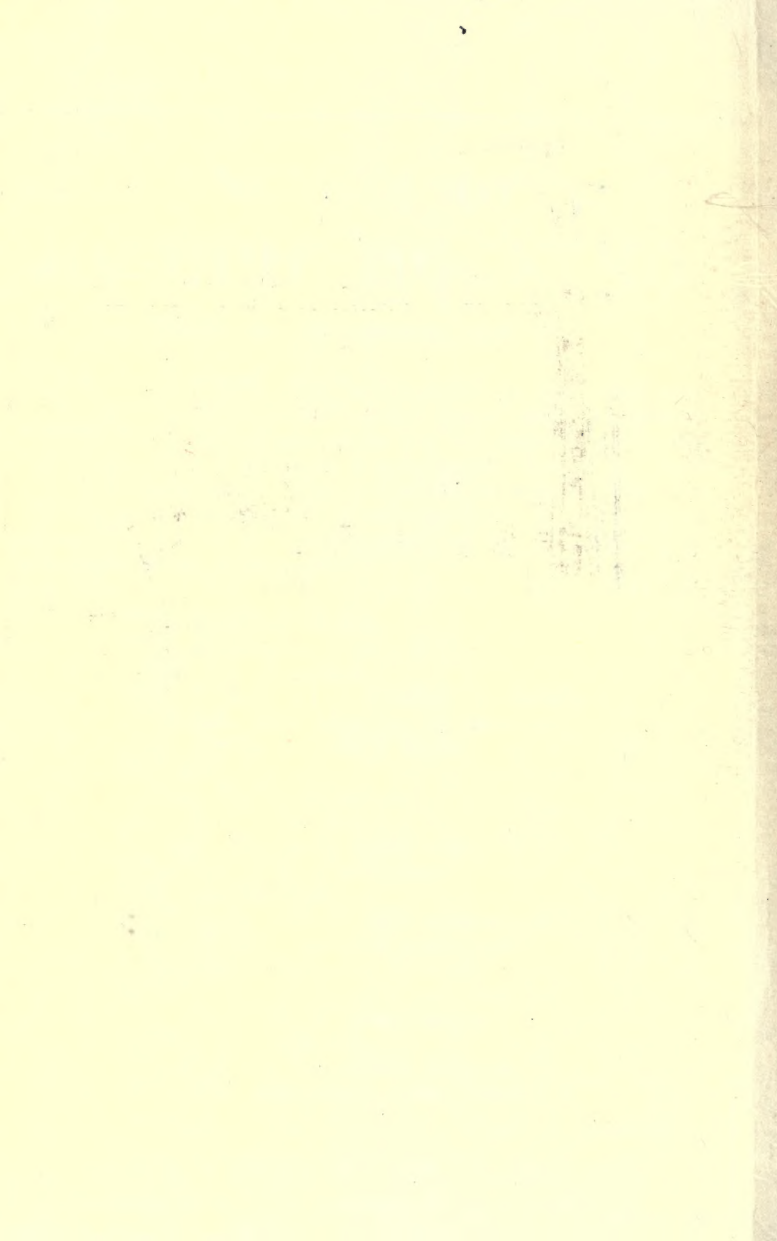
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